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Hay Wrightson

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LADY GREENWELL

Miss Henrietta Haig-Thomas, second daughter of Mr. and Lady Alexandra Haig-Thomas, was married on Monday to Captain Sir Peter Greenwell, only son of the late Sir Bernard Greenwell, a pioneer of modern agriculture, and the Dowager Lady Greenwell

task. Granted it may be that they, like others, do not approve of seeing a tubed, a one-eyed or an ex-bus horse beating one of the high lights in the 'chasing world, but so long as the race is a handicap such a thing should be, as it has been, possible. It is a mistake to tamper with the conditions and the character of a century-old event that, throughout its history, has borne evidence to the sporting spirit of what is, as ever, a sporting country.

Heading the list on the 12st. 11lb. mark are Airgead Sios and Royal Mail. The former, who belongs to Sir Francis Towle and is trained by Mr. Victor Tabor at Epsom, will probably find the distance beyond his compass; the latter seems in every way to have an enviable chance of joining the select band of dual winners, the history of whom formed the subject of a recent article. Like Gregalach and Reynoldstown, a son of My Prince, Royal Mail won the Grand National of 1937 with 11st. 13lb. on his back; in 1938, after being sold to Mrs. Camille Evans for 6,500gs., he was pulled up after breaking a small blood vessel, and last year, with the same weight—12st. 7lb.—as he carried in 1938, he finished ninth behind a lot of horses all of whom he can now meet on vastly better terms. Workman, the winner, was, for instance, then in receipt of 29lb., whereas the difference is now only one of 10lb.—a difference of 19lb. that should make all the difference. Macmoffat, who was second, and the mare, Symæthis, who occupied the fifth position, are worse in with him by 13lb., and Miss Paget's Kilstar, who was reputed to be a certainty last year, and was regarded by many as unlucky not to win, has an extra 11lb. to

shoulder for finishing third, and is now at a disadvantage of 17lb. with Mrs. Evans' horse.

That, put succinctly, shows exactly how Royal Mail stands in relation to the more important of those that he met in the race last year, and when, in addition, it is noted that he is trained by Mr. Ivor Anthony, who nowadays carries on the late Hon. Aubrey Hastings' stable at Wroughton, and will most certainly not lack for jockeyship, the stage seems set fair for a popular victory. But such certainties or popular fancies have failed just as Kilstar did last March. At Aintree the form book is not everything; there are many other factors to consider. Royal Mail, though of the same age as Battleship, who won two years ago, is, at eleven, getting on in years for the National journey. Symæthis has made up in improved form quite as much as, if not more than, the extra weight she has to carry. Black Hawk was desperately unlucky last March; when leading at the last open ditch he got the worst of a collision with Workman, with the inevitable result. Whispers from Ireland suggest that Sir Alexander Maguire may run Sterling Duke, who ran second in the Red Cross 'Chase at Leopardstown, in preference to Workman, and it should be noted that he has only the minimum impost to carry. Even supposing that Miss Paget considers that Kilstar has been overburdened, she has others, like her new purchase, Le Cygne, who fell at the first fence in the Leopardstown race, and that grand young horse, John Chinaman, to choose from. These and other factors can be discussed later; meanwhile, though Royal Mail seems to dominate the situation, a fascinatingly interesting contest seems assured. ROYSTON.

THE ESTATE MARKET

NORFOLK GAME-BAGS

NORFOLK has always enjoyed something approaching a pre-eminence as a county of first-rate shooting. The "Household and Privy Purse Accounts of the LeStranges of Hunstanton" show, as early as 1526, a payment of "12d. to John Manne, for a pound of gone-powder for my master," and seven years later: "receyvyd of Matthew the smyth for a gone-makyn 24d." The bags of pheasants shot in a single day on a Norfolk estate have numbered as many as 3,114, to mention but one instance, in November, 1896. Nine miles from Norwich is the Haveringland estate of 4,267 acres, of which 940 are woodland. It is intended to let the shooting on the estate, the tenancy to begin in June, or, if specially desired, at an earlier date, and the agents are Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley. The rent is eighteenpence an acre, the tenant to pay the rates and the wages of the gamekeepers. At present there are only three gamekeepers. Two cottages can be let with the shooting, and there is a farmhouse that would make a very suitable shooting-box. It can be included in the tenancy if a tenant wishes, and at a reasonable rent. The game-bags are of sufficient interest to justify their being set out in detail for typical years:

	1937-38.	1938-39.
Partridges	136 ..	476 ..
Pheasants	1,167 ..	1,401 ..
Duck	50 ..	26 ..
Sulphur	5 ..	— ..
Woodcock	41 ..	21 ..
Pigeon	12 ..	7 ..
Various	6 ..	19 ..
Hares	48 ..	75 ..
Rabbits	79 ..	166 ..

SIGNS OF AN IMPROVEMENT

IN accordance with their time-honoured rule, Harrods Estate Offices issue a short review of real estate transactions at the end of their financial year, January 31st. Their practice has enabled the results of the first month of 1940 to be taken into account, so, to a certain extent, the inactivity of the first four months of the war has been offset. Gradual adjustment to war-time conditions has taken place in regard to real estate, as in every other department of the national life, and the past month has seen a welcome revival of interest in many sections of the market.

For a year or eighteen months London property had not been easy to deal with, either by way of sales or lettings, and the outward wave, when war was declared, seemed likely to leave a vast number of houses and flats high and dry above the point of income production or negotiability. But a few weeks of reflection, stimulated by the study of actual conditions, has brought a great many people back to



POLSHOT FARM, ELSTEAD, NEAR GODALMING

London, not merely the officially evacuated masses, but those who had vacated flats and houses. A comparable movement back to London has been witnessed in the case of commercial and professional organisations, which at great expense provided themselves with emergency quarters in the country.

One result of the outward trend last year, a trend that became very noticeable as early as the autumn of 1938, has been an improved demand for small rural retreats. That demand has been sufficient to compensate to some extent for the number of people who have, through altered circumstances of work or income, been compelled to seek comparatively inexpensive accommodation in town.

Notwithstanding all the difficulties of the period, Harrods Estate Offices have been able to sell or let, and, acting for clients, to purchase, a large number of town and country properties, some of the latter being of considerable acreage, with houses of "country" importance.

INCREASING ACTIVITY

A GOOD many sales are announced by Messrs. Wellesley-Smith and Co., including The Grange, a Queen Anne house and 60 acres, at Pulloxhill; Oak Lodge, a house built in the Elizabethan style, with 2 acres, at Storrington; the seventeenth-century house, St. Peter's Hill, Speen, in 2 acres of garden; and Rodney House, originally an inn, on Limpsfield Common.

Lord Trent has let his Jersey residence, The Grove, St. Lawrence, overlooking St. Aubin's Bay. In the letting, effected by Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley, are comprised the granite house, 9 acres of garden and woodland and park, and a farm of 7 acres, with a nice, comfortable house.

Polshot Farm, five miles from Godalming, is a house dating from early in the sixteenth century, and admirably restored and modernised. It is rich in old oak timbering, and there is good panelling. The gardens are prettily laid out, and the 32 acres are bounded by the Wey. Messrs. Hampton and Sons offer the

freehold "at a tempting figure." The house illustrates the charm of old roofs and massive chimney stacks, and the windows, with their leaded diamond-shaped panes, and the dormers, all make up a fascinating picture.

An Isle of Wight residence and 2 acres, offered for disposal by Messrs. Hampton and Sons for £1,950, is a leasehold for 999 years at a moderate ground rent.

Houses at Ascot and Bracknell, among others, and some building land, have been sold by Mrs. N. C. Tufnell's Sunninghill agency, and one or two houses have been let with an option to purchase.

Commander C. W. Park, R.N. (Ret.), has disposed of The Foss, Driffild, through Messrs. Jackson Stops and Staff, who have also sold Swillbrook Farm, Minety, a fine farmhouse belonging to Mr. Roger Kennaway.

Sales effected by the Maidenhead, Sunningdale, Windsor and Slough offices of Messrs. Giddy include Brockhurst, Farnham Common, a modern residence with outbuildings and 5 acres; The Warren, Farnham Common, a sixteenth-century residence adjoining Burnham Beeches; several houses in Maidenhead; 28, Park Street, Windsor; Foley's Cottage, Corton, near Warminster (with Messrs. Rawlence and Squarey); 9, Alexandra Road, Windsor; 59, Kings Road, Windsor; The Pantiles, Waltham St. Lawrence; Braeside, Virginia Water; 20, Waterbeach Road, Slough; Castle Rising, Slough; and building sites in Cookham Dean.

A HOUSE ON THE CHILTERN

OVER £12,000 has been expended in recent years on the remodelling and modernising of Dennison House, Little Gaddesden, near Berkhamsted. It stands 60ft. above sea level, near Ashridge Park, overlooking the village. Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley have let the house on behalf of the owner, who is on active service. The tenants are the Incorporated Froebel Education Institution.

The Manor House, in the centre of Maidenhead, and The Close, White Waltham, are among sales just concluded through the agency of Mr. Cyril Jones. His Maidenhead office carried out 231 sales or lettings last year.

Mr. Ralph Ellis and Mr. Vincent Galsworthy have retired from the firm of Messrs. Farebrother, Ellis and Co., as from the end of 1939. The practice will be carried on, at Fleet Street and Dover Street, by the remaining partners, namely, Messrs. S. A. Wilde, E. Munro Runtz, Peter Galsworthy, Alan W. Ellis, Philip H. B. Buckland, Leslie P. Woolf, and W. H. Giffard. ARBITER.

COUNTRY NOTES

TO many people the late Governor-General of Canada never ceased to be John Buchan, their companion in a succession of breathless adventures so circumstantial and vivid that we could almost swear, like George IV of Waterloo, that we were there. "The Thirty-nine Steps," "Greenmantle," "Prester John," and even the later biographies of Montrose and Cromwell, share this power of persuasion in personal experience. Yet nearly all Lord Tweedsmuir's literary work was in the nature of spare time recreation, and the pathetic aspect of his death is that it was due to injury of that amazing brain which has brought solace and adventure to so many millions. By no means all of his admirers realised how much brilliant service led up to his appointment as Governor-General, which is certainly unique as the culmination of a literary career. But by nature and training John Buchan was well equipped for his last station. He was yet another of that brilliant band of young men whom Lord Milner gathered round him in South Africa and in whom he inculcated the conception of the modern British Commonwealth of self-governing nations. It was this faith that formed the core of Lord Tweedsmuir's many-sided activities—as lawyer, publisher, poet, and journalist, in addition to historian and novelist—and to which he brought the unusual combination of tireless industry and imagination.

HUNTING AND SHOOTING AND RACING

THE place of field sports in war-time (if the industry of the Turf may be included among them) has now been clarified and defined, for this year at any rate. As long ago as November the Minister of Agriculture stated the Government's approval of hunting as a means of keeping down foxes, and to that extent the necessary allowance of feeding-stuffs has been procurable. Now the M.F.H. Association has elicited from farmers and poultry-keepers that they will welcome the season being continued for the usual period. It had been proposed to call off hunting at the end of February, so as not to interfere with crops. The extension of pheasant shooting till the end of March is sensible, both as supplementing food supplies and in view of the number of birds left by the disorganisation of the normal shoots. But "cocks only," gentlemen, please! The Jockey Club's fixture list for the first half of the year is an encouraging and highly creditable one, with a good many more meetings than might have been anticipated. All meetings at Ascot, Epsom, Kempton, Lingfield, Sandown, and some more local courses, are cancelled. But over thirty have been arranged, covering the chief of the remainder, and with little reduction in duration. There will be altogether nine days at Newmarket.

ARTISTS TO RECORD MENACED SCENES

THE death of Mr. Harkness has taken place when the Pilgrim Trust, which owes everything to him, has just given help to a project of particular interest to readers of COUNTRY LIFE. Its plans for our "edification" were outlined two weeks ago. Now the Ministry of Labour announces the making of a pictorial record of many beautiful landscapes, houses and villages which are in danger of being spoilt or destroyed. This recording of what Sir Llewellyn Smith, in a letter to *The Times*, calls our "vanishing heritage of beauty" is not only a worthy object in itself but will give work to artists who, owing to the war, have temporarily lost their markets. The committee proposes to make a start with the six counties of Buckinghamshire, Dorset, Essex, Suffolk, Sussex, and Yorkshire, and in them will be abundance of material. We are, moreover, very glad to know that the work will not be confined to the more popular aspects of the picturesque but will also be directed to urban landscape and to those survivals of seventeenth and eighteenth century architecture which are always in peril and in which so many country towns are still rich. We take leave to wish the scheme every possible success.

FRANCIS FORD

THE death of Mr. Francis Ford means to the older generation of cricket-lovers the loss of an unique personage, the youngest and best of a long line of cricketers. The tall thin figure, with a suggestion of delicacy and droop in it, made more exciting the contrast with that hitting at once so fierce and so orthodox. The obvious comparison is with another left-handed and still greater Francis, Woolley, and that is the highest possible praise. A little scene comes back to mind from some thirty years ago when Mr. Ford had already retired ten years from first-class cricket. The match was on the pretty little ground at Rye, and there were some good cricketers playing, including on the opposite side to Mr. Ford's a young professional who bowled occasionally for Kent. Mr. Ford, looking cold and rather bored, insisted on fielding in gloves and a blazer with his coat-collar turned up. When it was his turn to bat there was no boredom for anybody. He had temporarily lost the art of timing his drives. A mighty hit was constantly expected, but his bat seemed to stray and nothing in particular happened. Yet in a remarkably short space of time, by cutting and by merciless hooking of any kind of shortish ball, he made over 200 runs. Once a great cricketer always a great cricketer, and never was the fact more clearly demonstrated.

REQUEST

O Lord, what time thy trumpet calls
To raise me from my earthy bed,
Not only to thy battlements,
Let my unfaltering feet be led.

Lord, Lord, count not my sins so foul,
That I may not submit one plea
To linger sometimes near that Earth,
Which gave such friendliness to me.

Whate'er thy favours, let me share
The talk of labourers, at an inn;
Or hear the huntsman's horn again,
High in the morning, sweet and thin.

And hear again a pheasant screech,
Or a dog barking in the brake,
Or cattle lowing in the chine,
Or the gay chatter magpies make.

So I may wonder, if by thy grace,
There yet could be an April rise
Of the brown trout, for man's delight,
Within the pools of Paradise.

ANTHONY RICHARDSON.

VALOROUS DISCRETION

MRS. CLUPPINS denied indignantly that she had listened; the voices had been very loud and forced themselves upon her ear. The Government is of opinion that far too many voices have been too loud and have been heard by ears only too receptive. They have started a campaign of hushing accordingly, and, if only in gratitude for Fougasse's delightful pictures, we ought to be careful. As we regard that of the two imbeciles shouting at one another "strictly between these four walls," we may well feel the lash on our own backs. It is no doubt a pity that in the cause of patriotic reticence we must sometimes check a friendly impulse. This war, like the last one, has had the effect of making people more sociable, and in many a railway carriage frigid persons, who used to guard themselves with a Maginot Line of newspaper, are prepared to converse with perfect strangers. Unfortunately, the obvious thing to talk about is the war. A spy, whether amateur or professional, must often draw blank and must indeed suffer such agonies of boredom as to doubt, like the charity boy at the end of the alphabet, "whether it's worth going through so much to learn so little." Yet now and again it is clear that he does learn something, and it is that chance, even if it be one in a hundred or a thousand, that we must determine not to give him. If our fighting forces show the valour, we at least can show the discretion.

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THE PARLOUR FRONT

SIR JOHN ANDERSON himself has said that the black-out is not intended to be carried indoors. It is national property and must be left outside. Indeed, it is our duty to keep our homes as bright and cheerful and comfortable as possible. Restrictions—even, if the need come, privations—are more easily borne in an environment that pleases the senses than in one that adds the additional burdens of unnecessary discomfort or sordidness. Some doubt has been cast upon the lofty aesthetic implication of the Chinese proverb in which the sage are counselled to "sell a loaf and buy a lily," by the recent correspondence in these pages about edible lily roots. The saying may, after all, be giving, not a spiritual ideal, but sound gastronomic advice. Nonetheless, so long as the sage have a loaf in hand, the Institute of Industrial Psychology would undoubtedly endorse the view that the loaf would taste better, with butter or no, and therefore be more easily digested, if eaten with a lily on the table or in surroundings equivalently adorned.

In happier times this is the season when thoughts turn to spring cleaning. After a winter such as we have had, a good many thoughts are probably directed to that topic in any case. Pipes have burst, carpets and covers and walls are spoilt; refugees and evacuees have come and possibly gone, and in either case the place is not what it was; or valuable possessions have been consigned to a place of greater safety, leaving aching voids if not discoloured patches. Do replacements and redecorations come under the head of justifiable expenditure? The Chancellor and other authoritative voices impress on us the absolute necessity of saving to win the war, but there is no doubt that necessary redecoration and essential replacements cannot be included under his ban. Quite apart from tenants' obligations, in war-time it is really more necessary than in peace to "keep the home fires burning" by maintaining the decencies and amenities of a self-respecting home. Incidentally, the building industry, we all know, is disastrously affected by the war, and, although the repapering of a few rooms will make no appreciable difference in the abstract, it may make just the difference to whether many

small builders and decorators are able to carry on. The same applies to all those engaged in the arts, whether fine or applied, whose livelihood has hitherto depended on the patronage of those with a pride in their homes.

Economy in expenditure requires no urging to income-tax payers. The memory of January's demands and the lively apprehension of the Budget sees to that. But the eye and the mind are not purse-proud, and most of us can testify that many of the most satisfying effects in the treatment of rooms have often been found in the homes of our more impecunious friends who have supplemented their resources with imagination and taste.

ASSURANCE IN WAR-TIME

IN an interesting discussion at the Auctioneers' and Estate Agents' Institute Mr. Sidney Smith pointed out the way in which the knowledge and experience of valuation in the past has now to be adjusted to a war conducted on an unprecedented scale. For instance evacuation has introduced a completely novel factor. In the "Great War" there was no such movement of business and population. In this war many business centres all over the country, with their offices, warehouses and commercial premises, have been very largely evacuated. Suburban and neighbouring residential districts are full of houses either empty or half empty. And though this movement of activity and population is nominally intended only to meet the conditions of war-time, there may actually be, in some important cases, a permanent diversion of business from normal pre-war industrial and commercial areas. The problem of war risks and reinstatement of damage is also entirely altered. In the last war insurance of war risks was voluntary and Lloyd's policies were available at the outbreak of hostilities at premiums which varied from 2s. to 7s. 6d. in normal cases. Later there was a Government grant to uninsured persons for loss up to £500 and an effective Government insurance administered by the insurance offices. Compensation was, of course, paid during the war itself. To-day any such arrangement is declared impossible, but the general feeling at last week's meeting appeared to be that if only some such mutual assurance scheme as that recently proposed by the Associated Chambers of Commerce could be put into practice, a large measure of confidence might be restored, even at this late hour, to the property market. Since then the Treasury has repeated its refusal to adopt or sponsor any scheme of a mutual kind dealing with war risks. But though these risks may have to remain in a state of suspended animation until the conclusion of hostilities, the Englishman's Home has to be—and can easily be, as Mr. A. J. Monro shows on another page—protected and insured against a hundred ever-recurring risks which do not arise specifically from enemy action.

In another direction, the purchase by a great assurance company—the Prudential—of Foremark Hall in Derbyshire and about eight square miles of farmland is a significant event. Besides the welcome preservation of a fine Georgian mansion, the most important work of a Warwick architect named Hiorns, the purchase of a large agricultural property may well signify the beginning of a new era in farming. Clearly, land has been recognised, by some of the leading actuarial experts, as a first-rate security. This has led to the keeping together of a long-established agricultural community, thus avoiding the disaster of a break-up and forced sale to tenants without sufficient capital to work the land properly. But a new type of landlord has also come into being: wealthy, probably progressive, and no doubt to be advised by experts, but one that will also, no doubt, view agriculture as a strictly business proposition. It may be expected that the old easy-going relationship between tenant and landlord will be replaced by one laying greater emphasis on efficiency. Two important changes may also be expected in the long run: on such an estate an experiment may be made in large-scale farming, with the whole estate, rather than individual farms, forming the unit of operations. And the voice of the landowner in the councils of the nation will be supplemented by one to which the accusations of "vested interests" will no longer be applicable in the old derogatory sense.

A COUNTRYMAN LOOKS AT THE WAR

THE HUNTING CAT—SECRET REVELATIONS—INSHORE FISHERMEN

By MAJOR C. S. JARVIS



INSHORE FISHERMEN OF THE OLDER GENERATION

A FACT that the recent falls of snow have brought to light is the very great number of cats that work the hedgerows and woods of the countryside by night; a far greater number possibly than the average preserver of game and his keeper imagine. Their footprints were evident in places a mile or more from any house, suggesting that *Felis domestica* is a very wide-ranging animal and that much of her wanderings by night are unknown to us.

The hunting cat may be divided into three classes: the house cat, who has a perfectly good home, a warm fireside, and unlimited food, but who is a rover at heart and likes to spend a night out occasionally on a sporting expedition; the farmyard or stable cat, who has to fend for herself and family round the outhouses, with frequent explorations abroad; and the animal that has gone completely wild, living in the woods and hedgerows, and who ranks top of the list of the gamekeeper's list of vermin. The trouble is that this quite wild cat is usually capable of looking after herself, and the animal the keeper shoots is too often the household pet on one of her sporting adventures.

I WONDER if the hunting cat really deserves the bad reputation she has acquired, and if she specialises in feathered game as the keeper believes? If one sees a lean, yellow-eyed creature lurking in the undergrowth of a pheasant preserve, one naturally jumps to the conclusion that she is up to no good; but the evidence of the snow goes to prove that, at this time of the year at any rate, the semi-wild cat is "helping to win the war," for nearly all the tracks converged on hedgerows and ditches where rats were in residence, and in two places there was direct evidence of a kill. Not very much was left for the observer to form his conclusions; in one case it was a huge scaly tail with a patch of fur attached to the base, and the other was a large pink and unpleasantly-human foot; but they were sufficient to prove that two members of the farmers' worst enemies in this country had passed out, and if this sort of thing is going on every night all over the country the character of the hunting cat must be reconsidered and revised.

My own small plot of pasture and woodland is quartered and ranged every night by hunting cats, and the garden has been full of birds that are half-torpid with cold, but recently there have been no patches of feathers in the morning marking the scene of a bird murder. There has been, on the other hand, hardly a night when we have not heard the death-squeal of a rat, and as I am not a cat-lover this is in the nature of a genuine unsolicited testimonial.

IN a recent book of mine, title suppressed as I must not use this page for self-advertisement, I tell the true story of a journey made in 1917 across France from Marseilles to Dieppe which lasted for four days instead of the customary fifteen hours. It was mid-winter, there were no windows to the carriages, and we had no food, as we were supposed to obtain our meals from the various towns we passed on our way. The trouble was we never knew when and where we were going to stop, or for how long; so we ordered meals we had no time to eat, lost the train and had to run it down in the open, or, alternatively, sat in cold carriages wondering when we would start. When we arrived at Dieppe after this ghastly four days of uncertainty we discovered that the colonel in charge of the train was in possession of a typewritten schedule of the whole journey, showing the stopping places, time

available, and the estaminets where meals would be ready for us. When asked why he had not disclosed the information to the officers and men concerned he stated it was a highly confidential journal and might be of the very greatest value to the enemy!

I have been wondering where this colonel is serving in this war, and I think he must be in the Ministry of Information. It is so difficult to understand why this Ministry shows such painful discretion over matters of no vital importance in one column of a newspaper, and has allowed the editor to be quite forthcoming over other matters in the next column. Recently our newspapers have been full of large-type paragraphs of the great traffic hold-up, the suspended rail services, and the acute food and coal shortage; but the cause of all this was never mentioned in connection with the news. Not a word was allowed to appear of the situation being due to snowdrifts twenty feet deep, frozen signals, ice-encrusted rails, and all the other horrors we have suffered; and no attempt was made to show that all this would have occurred in precisely the same way if there had been no war. Here in England we knew that the weather was responsible for it all, but our newspapers are read all over the world, and translated extracts from them appear in every daily journal abroad from Japan to Iceland and Arabia to South America. The impression that people in these countries must have obtained is that we are desperately short of all commodities, and that owing to the war our whole traffic system has broken down entirely. If the Censor's department has sufficient powers to prevent all mention of weather until after the lapse of fifteen days, they should be able also to exert the same powers to control mention of traffic disorganisation due to that weather.

IN normal times our small southern ports contribute a very small quota towards the country's fish supplies, and this falling off, which is more or less recent, is due to a variety of reasons. In some places the shoals of herring, pilchard and other fish have deserted their old haunts. Round Brixham the trawling grounds have been ruined by the presence of old wrecks from the last war, and the majority of the famous Brixham trawlers are now converted into cruising yachts. In other places the great influx of summer visitors has caused the inshore fisherman to neglect his precarious livelihood for the more certain and lucrative one of catering for the amusement of holiday-makers. There is not much point spending the whole day repairing and preparing lobster-pots and trammel-nets, which may yield about five shillings-worth of lobsters or fish the following morning, when by working much shorter hours the boat can be more profitably employed in taking a party of visitors out to whiff for whiting.

The war, however, has altered all this, and, owing to the cutting off of foreign supplies, requisitioning of trawlers by the Navy, and the bombing of our fishing fleets in the North Sea, which is graded last as being the least important factor, there is a marked liveliness among the inshore fishermen, due to the increased demand for fish and the higher prices they are fetching. A catch that six months ago was hardly worth marketing is now well worth while, particularly as there will be a very reduced holiday season to look forward to.

SEVERAL years ago there was an old fisherman at Weymouth who worked single-handed at the mackerel in summer, dredged for frills in the winter, and who scorned the summer visitor. It was a great sight when mackerel were plentiful in the Bay to see him controlling the sail and tiller of his small boat and working four mackerel lines. When passing through a feeding shoal, when there were four fish on all the time, he appeared to have an additional pair of arms, for a line was hauled in every thirty seconds with a kicking mackerel on the end. There was a flick of the wrist, the fish was off the hook on to the pile at the bottom of the boat, and then over the side went that line and in came another. All the time with his knees and thighs he was controlling the tiller and the sheet, and even putting the boat about on a fresh tack. His eyes were as busy as his hands and legs. For when he was not hooking on a fresh lask (bait) or glancing at the set of the sail, he was looking ashore at his marks to locate the exact position of the shoal; the spire of St. Mark's Church, or the big elm at Radipole and the right-hand chimney of the Overcombe coastguard cottages against the White Horse on Sutton Poyntz Down. Mackerel are temperamental and uncertain fish, and when they suddenly decide to feed the fullest advantage must be taken of their short meal-time by running the boat constantly backwards and forwards through the shoal.

This old fisherman was extremely and actively religious, and on Sundays, clad in a frock coat, he preached in a small chapel on everlasting glory and its alternative, hell fire. When actually fishing he quoted freely from the Scriptures, and enlisted the help of the Deity on all occasions. One day when "drudging" for frills, he picked up the drudge, which is a small trawl, and threw it over the side with a pious "God speed the plough." A moment later there came from his lips the most amazing and shocking flow of profanity.

"God — and — it! If I ain't chucked my — old drudge over the side without a — rope made fast to it. Now I've lost my blue-pencil old drudge!"

THE ILE DE RE

Variations on the Game of French and English

By DENYS FORREST

Illustrated by MICHAEL WICKHAM

A PIECE of land wholly surrounded by water." The geography primer's definition of an island is the only satisfying one. And conversely, no island is worthy of the name if you do not feel everywhere upon it that you are living in the presence of the sea. The friend who wrote to me when I was in the Ile de Ré, asking whether my island was "small enough," showed much understanding, though of course area is not the absolute test; the important thing is that there should not be too much inland.

By this measure, the Ile de Ré is small enough to suit the most fastidious. Though some twenty miles long, it is never more than four miles wide, and has a cunningly irregular coastline. Moreover, it is sandy and very flat, a mere low, brown



PORTE DES CAMPANI (DETAIL)
The symbol of the Roi Soleil occupies the pediment



"SAINT-MARTIN HAS A PROFOUNDLY PEACEABLE AIR"



"THE PRETTY LITTLE PORT OF LA FLOTTE"

slip of a thing, quite lost between the two far more solid-seeming elements of sea and sky.

It is by night that this sense of insularity is most complete. It was my habit when I was staying in Saint-Martin, the *chef-lieu* of the island, to walk out at dusk beyond the fortifications. I used to be quite alone there, because Vauban, when he girt the little place with bastion and demi-lune and counterscarp in his most tremendous Uncle Toby manner (not to mention a ditch wide enough to accommodate a full-sized tennis court, which in fact it does), seems also to have placed a spell upon its inhabitants: they never stray outside his ramparts after dark.

Yet it is a pleasant time. The sea wind blows evenly across the open country; the grasshoppers sing; and all proportion is lost between the faint flashes from the lighthouses, north, south, east and west, and the glowworms in the roadside grass, and the gradually emerging stars. "What a good desert island this would make," you think, your back turned to Vauban's masterpiece. And even by daylight the idea persists that a deft expurgation of all the works of man would leave the greater part of the island—its wide-sweeping beaches, its gold and silver dunes and the hollow scrubby land behind them—looking very much as they do at this moment.

Of course, it is an illusion. Spectacular though his work was, Vauban was only one in an uncountable succession of moulders and shapers of the Ile de Ré. This mysterious power of man to stamp his image, and to go on stamping it, on the least amenable material! There is scarcely any aspect of the island which does



JEAN DE SAINT-BONNET DE TOIRAS. THE FAMOUS GOVERNOR OF ILE DE RE

not owe something to human planning and labour and sweat. The desolate coasts, for instance—low tide reveals them as the site of a highly concentrated and artificial shore-fishing industry; the sandy wastes—almost every patch, you will see if you look closer, is or has been part of a painfully contrived vineyard; the uninhabited marshes—they are managed as carefully as a nursery garden in the interests of the salt manufacture. Regarded thus, the Ile de Ré is one of mankind's most extraordinary possessions, a battlefield and a trophy in one.

I am afraid I must add that, as the name of Vauban may have hinted, it has too often been a battlefield in a more limited and literal sense. And this is the more to be deplored since—better out with it at once—the hereditary enemy in these parts, even more than in the generality of French provinces, has incontestably been England! I felt glad, when I was in the Ile de Ré during the late summer of this year, that affairs have in our time taken a different turn, and one can face the delicate subject of Retais history (such is the island's adjective) without blushing. In truth, the island—and St. Martin particularly—is starred with the emblems of English aggression, and, perhaps fortunately for our consciences, of at least one immortal and resounding English defeat.

Unwillingly, since there is so much that is curious to be noticed on the way, I must skip the first thousand years or so of Ré's connection with England. I must skip even the remarkable 300 years following the marriage of Duchess Eleanor of Aquitaine with Henry of England (1152), during which (except for the occasions on which we were chased out of it) the island was actually numbered among our possessions. I must come at once to the climax, and there is at least this much to be said for such a leap—that the story of the Duke of Buckingham's expedition against the Ile de Ré in the summer of 1627 takes one into almost every interesting corner of the island.

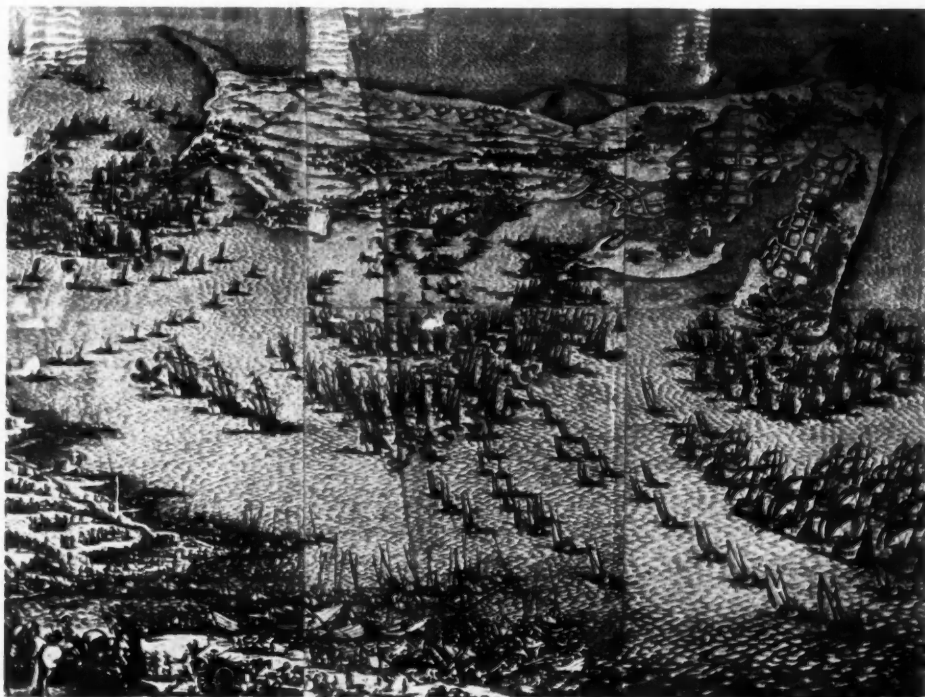
The average Englishman, when the Ile de Ré is mentioned, exclaims: "Oh, yes! What happened there? Something to do with the Huguenots, wasn't it?" A correct guess so far as it goes. It was at least partly for the sake of the Huguenots of the great Protestant city of La Rochelle that Buckingham picked his fatal quarrel with France. There were personal motives, too, behind the affair; there was, above all, a great political-strategic motive to which the merest glance at an atlas provides the clue.

Let your eye explore the long, smooth curve of France's Atlantic seaboard, southwards from Brest. Not much shelter there for shipping! None at all, in fact, until you reach the narrow roadstead, tucked in behind the Ile de Ré and its neighbour, the Ile de d'Oleron. In their perpetual quest for the command of the sea, a sheltering-place somewhere between Plymouth and Gibraltar was as valuable to our ancestors as Singapore is to us in 1939. Until the coming of steam, in fact, the Ile de Ré was one of the focusing points of British policy.

Buckingham's adventures began exactly where those of most modern visitors begin. There are two ways of reaching the island nowadays—either by steamer from La Rochelle to the pretty little port of La Flotte or to Saint-Martin; or, for those who prefer a very short crossing, by train from La Rochelle to La Pallice and thence by *vedette* to the point of Sablanceaux, the nearest spot to the mainland. It was at Sablanceaux that Buckingham chose to make his landing. No monument of any sort on the low promontory marks the place where 2,000 of his men fought their way out of the sea in the face of furious resistance from about half that number of Frenchmen under the thereafter-to-be-famous Jean de Saint-Bonnet de Toiras, Governor of the island. A desperate *mêlée* took place, half in and half out of the water, but finally Toiras had to withdraw. Among those left upon the field was the young Baron de Chantal, and so for a tragic instant were linked two of the most diverse celebrities imaginable. The obscure officer who (according to tradition) gave Chantal the *coup de grace* was Oliver Cromwell; and his death left fatherless a little girl later to be immortal as Madame de Sevigné.

Sablanceaux won, there is little doubt that had Buckingham pushed on the rest of the island could have been quickly subjected, and much later history altered thereby. But he chose to stay where he was for four days, while Toiras was fortifying and provisioning himself in the citadel at Saint-Martin, less than ten miles distant. At length, however, the Duke was ready to move, and, while all Europe gave him and Toiras its respectful attention, he set about laying siege to Saint-Martin in the grand style.

It would be possible to make a handsome story of that siege, with its sorties and night attacks; its swimming feats by volunteers carrying messages to King Louis; its courtly exchanges of melons and *chypre* between the opposing cavaliers. But, as ever, under the gallant sheen of seventeenth-century warfare there was a festering ugliness. Famine and disease wasted both camps, but especially the besieger's. All through the hot summer



CALLOT COMBINED IN ONE ENGRAVING THE CAPTURE OF THE ILE DE RE FROM SOUBISE AND THE PROTESTANTS (1625) AND THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM'S EXPEDITION (1627)

Among episodes shown are Buckingham's landing at Sablanceaux (extreme left), his siege of Saint-Martin (centre), and the re-embarkation of the remnants of his army from the "island" of Loix (centre right). The *marais salants* (salt pans) are conspicuous

(Musée Cognac-Jay Saint-Martin de Ré)

weather Buckingham watched his forces dwindle. By St. Denis' Day (October 9th) he was already in serious straits—

Buckingham vous avez juré
De prendre Saint-Martin de Ré
Si Saint Denis seul et sans tête
A renversé tous vos desseins,
Jugez que feront tous les Saints
S'ils vous rencontrent à leur fête !

The sinister hint came true. When All Saints Day arrived Buckingham had lost hope; Soubise and the Protestants of La Rochelle had supplied promises but no troops; King Charles had sent him one of his kind, despairing letters; the capture of the citadel seemed farther off than ever. A few days later the siege was raised, and the remnants of the English army retreated in the direction of Ars.

The wretched finish of the story may still be read vividly enough in the island's topography. Sablonceaux may seem tame, and Saint-Martin, for all its fortifications, has a profoundly peaceable air. But travel westwards along the route followed by the unhappy English, and the past comes sharply to life. For between Saint-Martin and Ars lies the country of the *marais salants*—the great salt marshes which appear as a rectangular pattern on Callot's engraving. It would be hard to imagine a worse line of retreat. To this day there is only one



INSCRIPTION RECENTLY RESTORED AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE CITADEL, SAINT-MARTIN DE RÉ

floating to them on the falling tide. That was the climax of England's long harrying of the Ile de Ré, and also its virtual end. In 1696, Lord Berkeley of Stratton's fleet bombarded Saint-Martin, and during the Napoleonic Wars various squadrons demonstrated off the Ile, but nothing spectacular was done.

To-day the principal relics of the great Buckingham expedition, besides such inscriptions as that reproduced on this page, are to be found in Saint-Martin parish church. Here hang replicas of no fewer than fifty-one standards captured by Toiras from the English and taken in triumph to Paris to be laid up in the church of Notre Dame des Victoires.

practicable road, and I know from experience how easily one goes astray if one leaves it and attempts a short cut through the maze of dykes and waterways and saltings.

Just where the "waist" of the island narrows to a few yards, Buckingham's army turned northwards, making for the so-called Isle of Loix, gained then, as now, by a narrow bridge. Here they were brought to bay; there was a sort of a battle—it merits no more precise definition—the retreat became an utter rout, and the next morning the sailors of the English fleet, waiting in the Bay of Loix to take the army off, were horrified to see the corpses of hundreds of their countrymen



THE BLACK AND WHITE FANTASY OF RETAIS ARCHITECTURE: THE RUINED TOWERS OF ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH, PAINTED AS A SEA MARK

BARN OWLS AT HOME

Barn Owls had, for many years, made their home in an ancient dovecote hanging on the walls of the author's house: this choice of residence on their part provided him with a unique opportunity for studying these ghost-like hunters of the night.



WAITING FOR DINNER: NOTE THE DOWN

IT is not given to every bird-lover, I imagine, to pursue his hobby and study bird behaviour at night in the soft ease and comfort of his regular bed. And when it is recorded that the species to which the following experiences relate is none other than that extremely interesting, if somewhat eerie and ghostlike disturber of the night watches, the barn owl, the degree of the writer's good fortune will be readily appreciated.

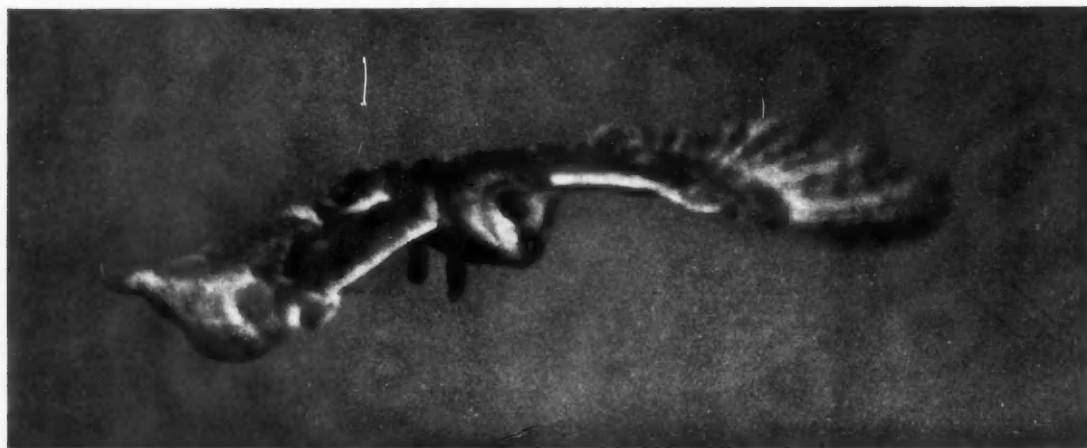
For longer than I can recall a pair of barn owls have nested every year in the old disused dovecote that hangs upon the wall outside my bedroom window. Their tenancy without question is of very long standing, having been handed down from generation to generation of owls. Local history is distressingly vague as to the last time that pigeons were known to inhabit it; but if the accumulation of castings inside the old cote be any guide to the date of their eviction, the tale of the intervening years must be considerable indeed. When for the first time I rigged a ladder against it and explored its miasmal and acrid interior, I discovered that the topmost storey of the little dwelling was so choked with a dense mass of broken and pulverised castings that the owls had had to resort to the second stage to find sufficient space for their nesting requirements. They had literally crowded themselves out of their own home with the insanitary accumulations of years. Owls notoriously never make any attempt to furnish a new nesting site with a soft and comfortable lining for the safe reception of their eggs, should none be normally present; nor do they apparently ever trouble themselves to sweep or garnish their home, even if the unsavoury carpet begins to bulk disconcertingly large for comfort. I will not attempt to estimate with precision the quantity of undigested fur and bone that constituted that grisly age-old deposit, nor the untold thousands of rats and mice that must have contributed to its steady accumulation; but some idea of the volume of the unwholesome mass will be gathered from the fact that it covered a floor space roughly a yard and a half long by a yard wide to a depth of some four inches. And it did not consist, be it remembered, of loose pellets lightly piled one upon another, but of a dense layer of plugs desiccated and powdered with the years, and trampled down into a compact and felted mattress of unrecognisable matter. That the owls had been forced to abandon their favourite nesting site owing to sheer lack of space,

which compelled them to remove to a lower stage, is evidenced by the fact that no sooner had I cleaned out the top story than the owls were prompt to return to it. It is darker and more secluded than the rest.

The annual nesting period of the barn owl is of long duration, longer possibly than of any other British bird of comparable size, if our calculations are based on the time spent at the nesting site. For April is the month during which the parent birds start their eerie courtship, and it is not until after September that the youngsters finally forsake the family home and gradually wander farther afield, learning from the old birds the way to fend for themselves. For varying periods even after that date the site continues to be used as a daylight retreat; but at dusk the inmates fly silently forth, and the hours of darkness find the ancient home abandoned and desolate. Taking therefore the extreme limits of the nesting season into account, it is reasonable to say that it covers on an average some six months of the year.

The courtship of barn owls is a nightmare. It is the inspiration, probably, of some of the weirdest and most blood-curdling shrieks, those unearthly cries which, emanating in the stillness of the night from some lonely dwelling or ruined habitation, have been the source of many a grim tale of haunting evil spirits and ghostly visitations. The lonely wayfarer at night, hearing their hideous serenade, feels his blood congeal at the sound of that hair-raising love-call, half hiss, half strangled scream, that rises in a fiendish crescendo to a pitch of deathly agony. It is their cry most commonly heard, for its fearful piercing note carries it afar.

But from the close seclusion of my bedroom I could catch a number of softer and more intimate calls, which would certainly pass undetected at any distance from which a watcher under normal conditions could hope to observe the owls at home, himself unobserved. The commonest was a gentle trill, rather like the cry of a dunlin, though more subdued and shorter. While another may best be described as a prolonged squeak, of very high pitch, but not loud. Others, consisting of some combination of hiss, snore, squeak or trill, so far from being startling or horrific, were uttered with a gentle modulation that bore unmistakably the tone of a caress. Nor were these tender loving notes confined to the



"AT DUSK THE WHITE OWL SPREADS HIS WINGS AND FLOATS SILENTLY FORTH"



"FROM THE TREE TO THE DOVECOTE, ONE BIRD MADE A HABIT OF HOLDING THE PREY IN ITS BILL, THE OTHER IN ITS CLAW"

ourtship period alone; I heard them used frequently when the young were first hatched, during the first ten days or so of their existence. Later, as they grew up, the pressure of hunting and the throaty vociferousness of the owlets themselves left little scope for any great display of tenderness or affection on the part of their parents. The youngsters during their early days used to fill in the time during the absence of the old birds by keeping up a continuous contented twittering, closely resembling the feeble clamour of sleepy, well fed chicks crowded together in an incubator. Their faint twitters would rise in a pathetic little crescendo of excitement when food was brought to the nest; but gradually, as the days progressed and the owlets themselves waxed in vigour, that frail crescendo became transformed into a slight hiss, from which were steadily evolved those characteristic sibilant sounds and stertorous snores, produced as it were by the pressure of escaping steam, which during the months of July and August seldom ceased to wrack the evening air.

A brood of hungry growing barn owls takes a deal of feeding. Five is the maximum number I have known successfully reared in a nest, the usual brood being three or four. With such a family to provide for, the old birds are assiduous in their hunting, and one or other of them returns to the nest with food roughly once every ten or fifteen minutes. From my bedroom window I had unrivalled opportunities for watching their activities. For familiarity soon banishes diffidence and fear, and the dove-cote barn owls, through their long association with the house and its human inhabitants, became remarkably tame. I could lean out of the window and gaze at them without in any way causing them to interrupt their usual activities or alter their normal behaviour. They even became inured to the white and dazzling glare of a 100-watt lamp—this was before the days, or rather, nights of blackout—whose rays cut the darkness like a searchlight. Likewise the opening and closing of windows and the sound of footsteps in the rooms were part of their daily experience, which they accepted without question. To turn on them the beam of a spot-light

torch merely caused them to blink their lustrous eyes in embarrassed bewilderment at its disconcerting brightness. No ordinary sight or sound about the house could ruffle their calm philosophic composure.

And so it happened that I would sit for hours together of an evening, listening to the strident chorus of the voracious owlets, what time both they and I kept eager watch for the coming of one or other of the old birds with a mouse or a young rat clasped firmly in its talons. For in flight I noticed the prey was carried in the claw, and was transferred to the beak either on alighting or just immediately before. Both old birds invariably settled in the old oak tree that grows beside the house, before flying up to the cote; their appearance on the scene was the signal for a veritable Babel of discordant cries and cacophonous hisses on the part of the impatient family. From the tree to the dove-cote, one bird made a habit of holding the prey in its bill, the other in its claw. The flashes with which the photographs were taken, it is needless to mention, were complacently ignored.

Though I have watched these birds for years, and have had these exceptional opportunities for studying their behaviour, I have yet to see a barn owl kill, carry, or consume feather of any kind. That they may on occasion eat birds is possible; it would obviously be foolish to affirm categorically that their excellent conduct never lapses in this respect; but from my own observations and experience of these wholly admirable birds I should say that such occurrences are extremely rare. The appetites of barn owls, which I have kept from time to time as pets, have averaged about six mice a night; it is probable that birds enjoying the exercise of complete liberty would eat more; but at the above conservative estimate each barn owl must account for over two thousand mice and young rats in the course of a single year. Here, indeed, is a bird that is a real power for good, a staunch ally of man in his unrelenting war against all manner of destructive rodents, a fast friend of the farmer if ever there was one.

R. ADCOCK.



HIS FIRST VOYAGE INTO THE WIDE WORLD



THE OLD BIRD BRINGS HOME A RAT TO THE YOUNG

PEASANT ART IN SWEDEN



INTERIOR OF A PEASANT'S COTTAGE AT BLEKINGE
Showing the typical hangings and three-legged chairs

WITH the Russian invasion of Finland and the torpedoing and mining of her merchant ships by Germany, Sweden finds herself in an anxious situation to-day. Finland is a Scandinavian country, and every Swede knows that if the Russians succeed in conquering the heroic Finnish army, Sweden's turn for browbeating and, possibly, invasion will not be long in following. Without going to the lengths of coming out openly in support of Finland—a course that would almost certainly involve her in war with Germany, a rival candidate for the rich Swedish ore mines—Sweden has not been slow in supporting her neighbour with arms, supplies and volunteers, many of whom are now fighting shoulder to shoulder with their Finnish brothers.

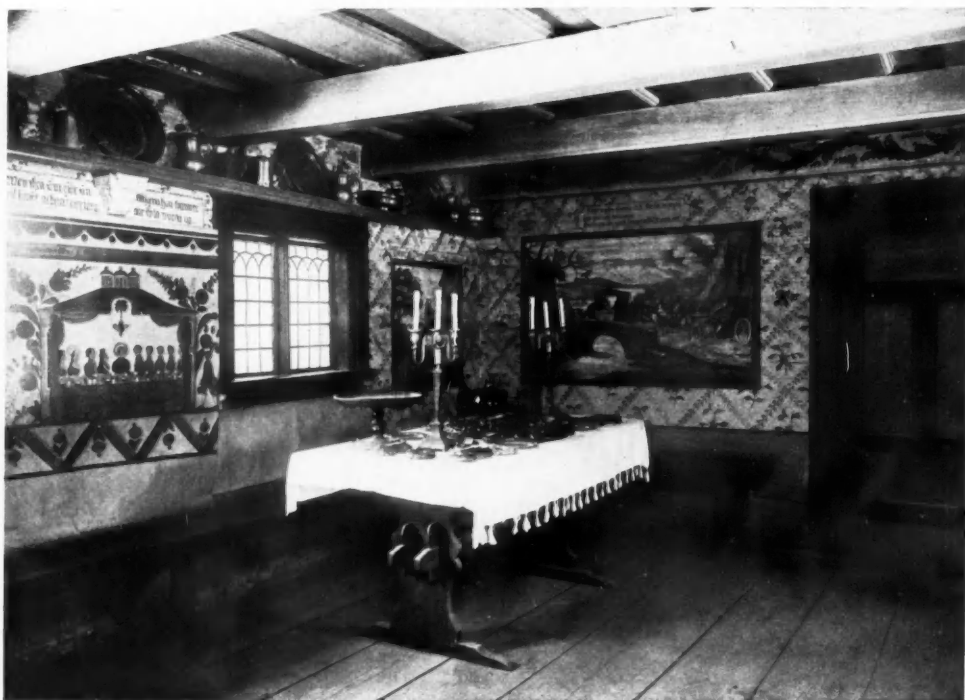
In this article readers are given a glimpse of the peaceful life and traditional home crafts of the industrious Swedish peasant, whose quiet existence is now menaced by Russian aggression and German threats. In many countries peasant art has been extinguished not by war but by the encroachment of industrialisation, and in Sweden, as elsewhere, this process has been going on. It was with the object of forming a record of Swedish peasant

arts and crafts before it became too late that the authorities of Stockholm brought together the wonderfully comprehensive collection which is housed in the famous Northern Museum and which has as its counterpart an open-air section at Skansen.

A strong conservatism existing side by side with marked local individualities is characteristic both of Swedish peasant art and architecture. This was partly due to the unusual configuration of the country, which with its dark and impenetrable forests caused the peasants to lead isolated lives, and partly due to the northern reserve of character which renders the people hostile to any departure from an accepted style or custom.

Judging from the remains of the early furniture, the Swedish peasants enjoyed very few of the amenities of life; their tables, for instance, were often plain boards supported by two wooden blocks, and when not in use were kept hanging on the wall by the two metal rings provided for the purpose. Indeed, the walls of the one room in which the family worked and played, lived and died, were used as a kind of anchorage for the sparse furniture it possessed, and the benches, which usually served as beds at night, as well as shelves and racks for household utensils, were all securely fastened to them.

With time and the growing demand for additional comfort the family bench was supplemented by the chair, which in its most primitive form was merely a stool fashioned from the stump of a tree, always irregular in shape. Highly prized examples of the seats still exist, and their appearance is quaint and often grotesque. The importance of the chair in the Swedish household, where it was regarded as the place of honour, doubtless led to great care being expended on its manufacture and design, and from the numerous examples which have been preserved it is interesting to note how, eventually, comfort came to be regarded as a necessary attribute of a good seat. This is particularly evident in some of the specimens from Scania, which have seats of plaited straw, are furnished with arms, and have pleasantly rounded backs. From Blekinge comes another chair which is among the best-known and most widely recognised of Swedish chair types; it is made with a



A FARMHOUSE INTERIOR OF NORTH SWEDISH TYPE
The paintings were executed in 1786 by Jonas Hertman, a village artist

broad back, often beautifully carved, circular seat and three legs. What must surely have been an innovation at the time was the table-chair, a composite piece consisting of a wide seat to which were attached two flaps which, when opened, formed a table.

Bed-sitting-rooms were a problem effectively solved by the peasants, and considerable ingenuity was displayed in the arrangement of their sleeping accommodation. Usually the beds were placed in recesses closed by shutters—these were known as closet-beds; or benches might be fixed to the walls, sometimes in tiers of two or even three. However, detached beds, similar to those in present use, existed from mediæval times, and several found at Scania, while primitive in construction, are beautifully carved in the Gothic style.

Although early Swedish peasant art shows individuality and a high standard of workmanship, it is from about the middle of the seventeenth century until the end of the eighteenth century that the best and most beautiful work was produced. So far as design and ornamentation are concerned, first Gothic and then the Renaissance were the chief sources of inspiration; it would seem that the more frivolous and lighter mood of the baroque and rococo baffled the peasant craftsman, who, unable to respond to the sophistication of these new styles, preferred to return to those ornamental geometrical *motifs* which had come down to him from mediæval times, and which have since been recognised as forming an accepted peasant style.

This is perhaps most apparent in the boxes and chests—



A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY PARLOUR OF A BERGSMAN OR MINE-OWNING FAMILY

skrinet—and also cupboards, those beautifully carved and painted objects on which the peasants spent so much time and work. Cupboards, almost unknown in mediæval Sweden, arose from the demand for greater convenience in the home, and in the carving and painting of these as well as the chests the native craftsmen found objects really worthy of their attention. Beautiful examples of both boxes and chests come from Västmanland and Västergötland; many of these, while revealing Renaissance influence in form, retain Gothic *motifs* in their decoration. Cupboards representative of the best type of Swedish work come from many parts, notably Halland, Dalarne, Småland, and Gästrikland.

To the Swedish peasant, work of this kind was a labour of love, into which he put his heart and soul, drawing his inspiration as much from Nature as from those styles prevailing at the time. He made beautiful things to satisfy an innate craving, and the long winter months provided him with the opportunity and necessary leisure to create. Thus it is that the simple porringers which appeared daily on the family table were as beautifully fashioned as the drinking vessels which played such an important rôle on festive occasions. These beakers, descendants of the ancient ale-bowls, with time became more elaborate, being decorated with carved floral *motifs* and scrolls. Some had exquisitely wrought handles in the form of an animal, and the most elaborate of all were furnished with long horns, often joined together, which encircled the head of the drinker. Equal care was expended on the various implements connected with spinning, often made as gifts to wives and sweethearts.

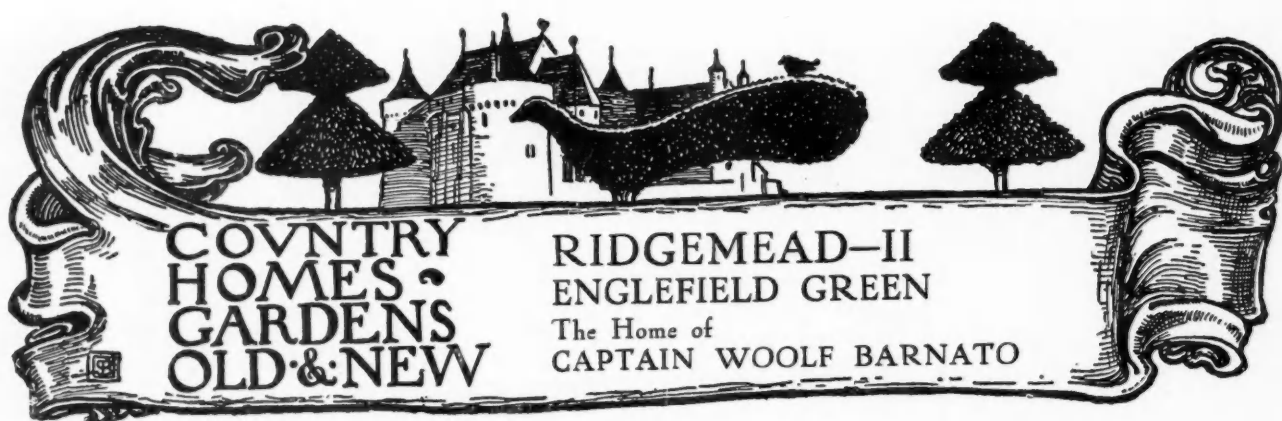
Like other articles made by the Swedish peasants, candlesticks and chandeliers vary considerably according to the district of their origin. Although wood was most frequently employed, interesting metal candlesticks and chandeliers are to be seen, many of which are decorated with hanging metal pieces of curious shapes, while others are surmounted by a cock, a symbolic figure of the ancient Scandinavian religion.

Colour was beloved of the Swedish peasants both in their national costume and in their wall hangings, accessories without which no Swedish house on festive occasions was considered properly dressed. These coverings, hung on the bare wood walls, were of painted, embroidered or woven linen, or else of painted paper. This ancient Scandinavian custom of covering the walls dates back to the times of the Vikings, when it was the practice to decorate the walls of temples in this way and to cover the tombs of dead warriors and members of prominent families. Paper hangings seem to have made their appearance in the course of the nineteenth century. Both the linen and paper hangings were adorned with religious and secular subjects, the religious characters generally being amusingly depicted in native Swedish attire. They are often decorated along the top with festoons and paintings simulating draperies. The linen varieties, so highly prized to-day for interior decorating purposes when they can be found, were the work of the women, who from time immemorial have been skilled weavers. To the women also fell the task of furnishing the family with the colourful costumes which have become traditional. Each village jealously guarded the peculiarities of style, and innovations were sternly frowned on by the elders of the parish. Silver ornaments were an important part of feminine adornment, and some exquisite work of the old-time silversmiths has been preserved. Most prized among the collections of buttons, rings, necklaces and clasps possessed by the women was the silver belt worn by the bride.

W. A. DE SAGER.



A DALECARLIAN PAINTING
Elijah being carried up to Heaven



"Internationalist" architecture versus imported styles: a discussion à propos Mr. Robert Lutyens' design, completed in 1938

THE clients' initial requirement for Ridgemead was for a building in the Mission style of California—that colourful provincial baroque evolved by the Jesuit fathers in Spanish America which looks so appealing in the climate of the Pacific coast. This set an interesting problem to an architect of Mr. Robert Lutyens' conscientiousness and originality, inheriting from his father the conviction that architecture must be shaped primarily by local conditions and materials. It is one thing to imitate a local style in its own locality. To lift it bodily to another hemisphere and climatic zone is to court failure. A mission building on the edge of Windsor Park would look as out of place as a half-timber Elizabethan house in Hollywood. He accordingly set about, with his clients' interested co-operation, to evolve a contemporary English house as it were in terms of a Californian Mission building.

But before enquiring into this interesting process it is worth considering another aspect of the question raised—that of the desire to transfer a local style in these days. There can be no objection to borrowing ideas from another country, or then the

Renaissance would have never got farther than Italy and the whole international modern style of design would be still-born. Some will say that it is, but not on those grounds.

What the modernists say is that you may borrow modern ideas, because they, like the whole modern style, are international; but borrowing an old foreign style is not approved of any more than refurbishing up an old native one. Yet, and this is the curious part about it all, the more internationally minded people become, and the more they see the world, the more natural it is for them to bring back memories of the local variants of architecture that have attracted them. There does not seem much point in going all the way to America or Japan, say, to be interested only in the modern buildings. Many of them undoubtedly are very remarkable and can teach us a lot, but so are many at home. Yet the closer the world is knit together, or, in other words, people get about, the more identical their houses should become. That, it seems to me, is the internationalists' idea and the fallacy of it.

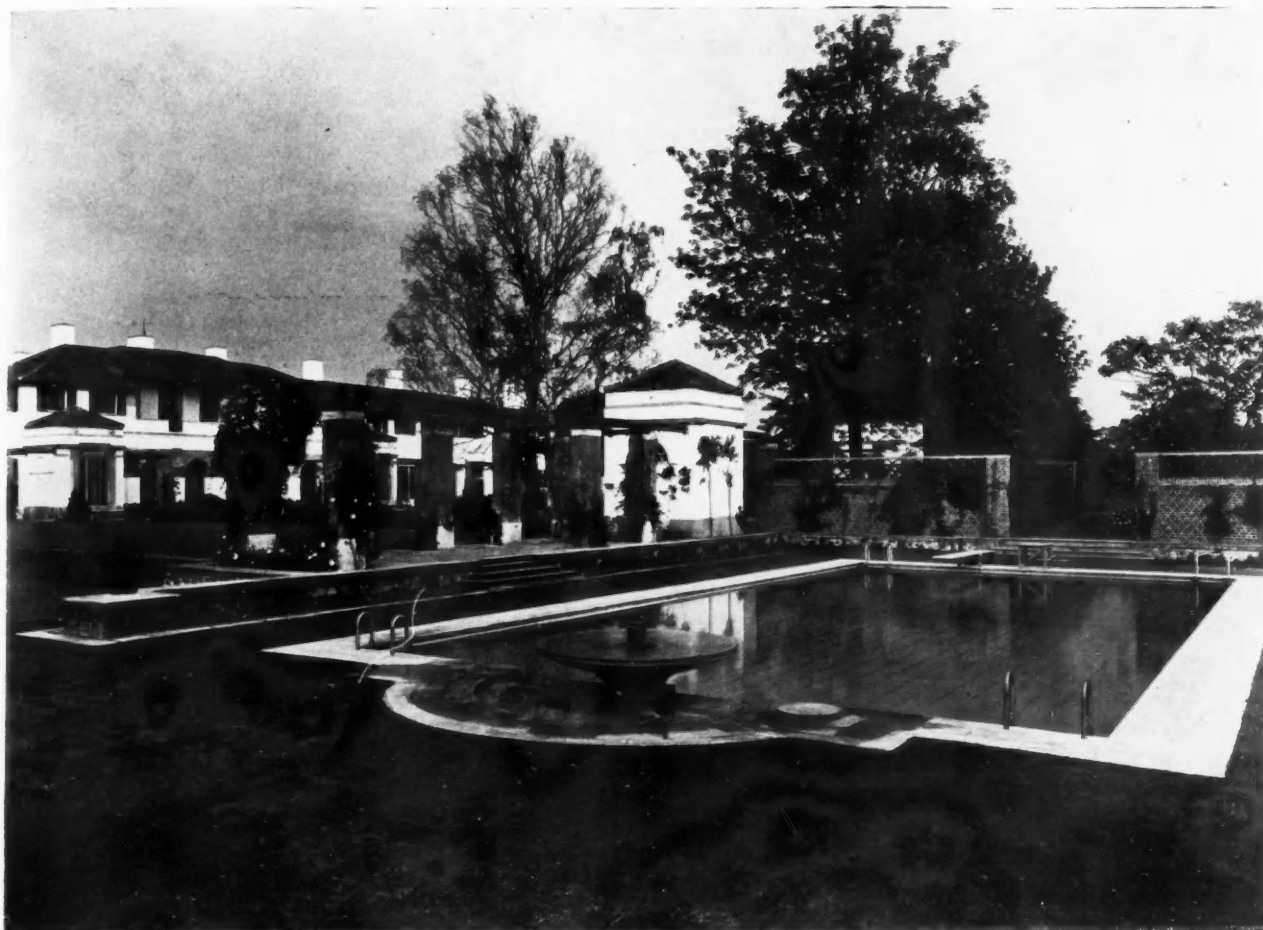
Are they behind or ahead of the times? The ideal of a



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1.—THE "PATIO": PAVED FLOWER AND WATER GARDEN, ENCLOSED BY PAVILIONS AND HERBACEOUS BORDERS

"Country Life"



2.—FROM THE SWIMMING POOL, WITH ONE OF THE FOUR GARDEN PAVILIONS



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3.—A CORNER OF THE PATIO. THE LOGGIA OUTSIDE THE DRAWING-ROOM "Country Life"

new international architecture based on scientific civilisation began to spread after the last war, fostered by the ideal of the League of Nations. Yet that war was largely fought for the principle of self-determination, and it resulted in more nations being formed on the basis of local variations of race and culture. Architecture was going one way, politics the other.

Of recent years internationalist architecture has not been making much headway in the domestic field. Scarcely any low-priced houses have adopted it, the vast majority affecting "ye olde worlde." Even among expensive houses I should say that fewer have been built in the modern manner during the last five years than in the previous five, though hospitals, schools, administrative and industrial buildings (with which may be grouped blocks of flats) have by now adopted it almost universally. That is to say that, where sentiment has no say, the logic of the international style has been fully recognised, though in some countries, in Germany and Italy particularly, the international outlook has been deliberately discouraged in favour of national traditions.

The failure of modern design to capture the imagination of the average householder is primarily due to the narrow-minded attitude of most of its exponents to the foibles of the layman. The average family man, of any nationality, is not logical, least of all as regards his home, the symbol and centre of his emotional life. And even if his intellectual outlook is wider than formerly (which is open to argument), his emotional life is certainly not. The very uniformity of an industrial civilisation makes him seek all the more to find self-expression, romance, and variety in his home. The ingenious speculative builder has evolved a number of formulae that do this up to a point within his clients' means, and provide the essentials of home life, though his achievement can scarcely be praised on any other grounds.

At the higher income-levels, builders of houses for the most part have a similar desire to express in their homes their



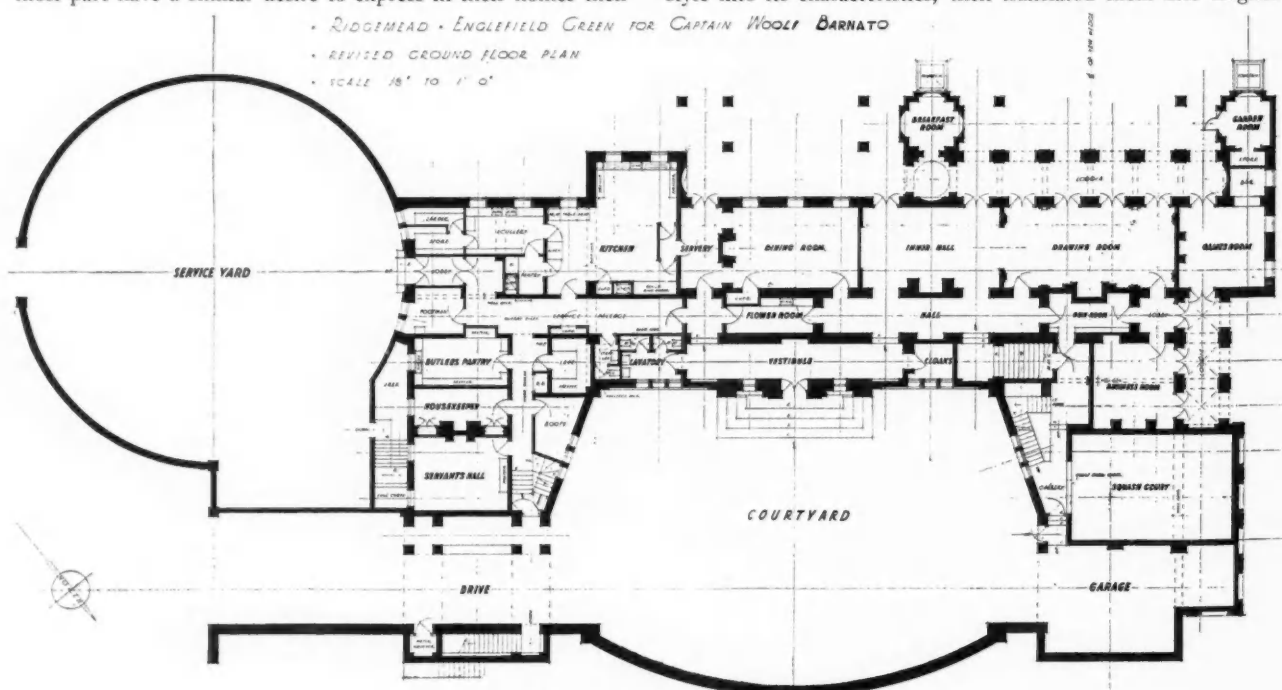
4.—LOOKING ALONG THE GARDEN FRONT. A FOUNTAIN PLAYS OUTSIDE THE BREAKFAST ROOM

personal inclinations, be they for the sociable virtues of the Georgian, the hearty simplicity of the Elizabethan, or for pleasant memories of romantic sunny climes. Unless they are architecturally minded, they may not be deterred from carrying their feelings to the extent of mimicking their favourite kind of house—though they would be the first to ridicule anybody who turned up to dine in Elizabethan dress because he admired Shakespeare or Francis Drake. But a sense of history,

style, or the exotic is a valuable and delightful quality if kept within the bounds of good manners. It can enrich conversation so long as it does not become a bore, an obsession. So, surely, can the same quality enrich architecture so long as it is kept within the bounds set by local conditions of climate and materials, and does not become an obsession.

If an individual, or a house, is isolated, an obsession does not really matter. It is in company that a bore is discouraged, and a bore is a person (or house) that does not adjust himself to his neighbours. A row of houses in a street all of different styles and proportions is like a dinner-party where everybody talks about themselves without stopping. A Georgian, or for that matter a consistently designed row of "international" houses, is a civilised party at least putting up a show of being pleased and agreeing with one another. We all know that a celebrity not quite big enough to fit himself to his company is usually a crashing bore at a party. Hence the antipathy to many big modern buildings in previously sociable neighbourhoods.

Here in the country, then, Mr. Robert Lutyens was free to design Ridgemoor in any style that was preferred, so far as its relations to other buildings were concerned. But he was not independent of the factors (already mentioned) that ultimately control what is appropriate in an English country house. Bearing these in mind, he seems to have resolved the desired style into its characteristics, then translated them into English



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GROUND FLOOR PLAN

"Country Life"



5.—THE VESTIBULE
The front door is seen on the right



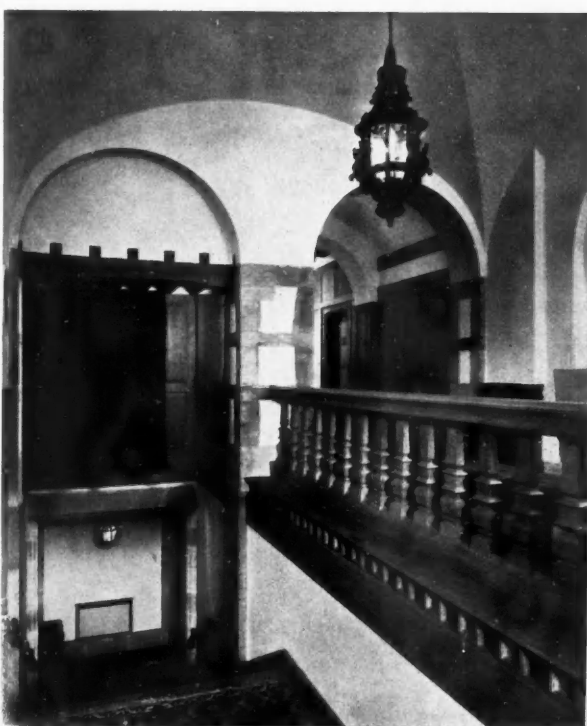
6.—THE LONG, NARROW HALL
Vestibule and stairs on the left

usage, and recomposed the results into a house fitted to its setting and use.

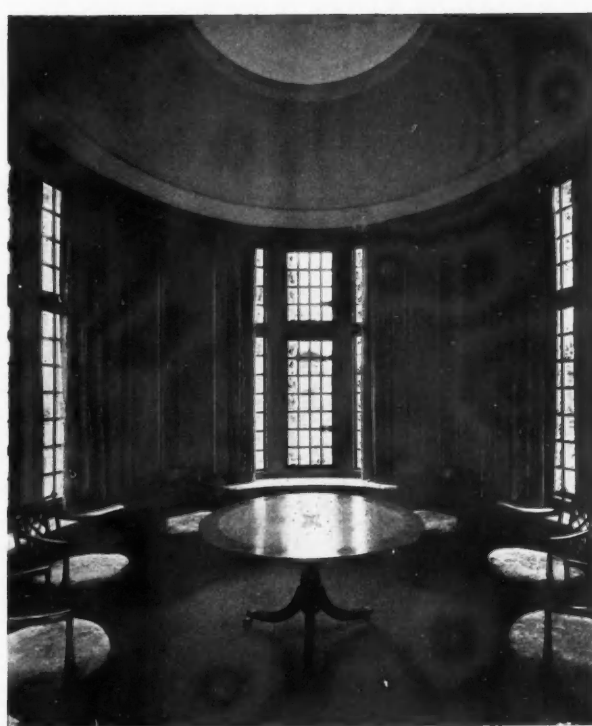
The characteristics of "Spanish Mission" comprise low horizontal lines, thick white walls, heavy pantiled roofs of low pitch, arched cloisters, a patio full of flowers and fountains, and effects of strong light and shade. In this climate a patio of a size to be surrounded by a house of workable dimensions would tend to be small and therefore dank. Accordingly at Ridgemoor the "cloister," with pools and flowers in its paved surface, is merely, yet sufficiently, suggested by four pavilions at its angles, two against the house, two at the outer corners (Figs. 1 and 2), and a single arcade; the side walls by herbaceous borders. The effect of an enclosed, hot space is brilliantly suggested by these restrained means, while pergolas (of brick and oak beams instead of plastered brick and vines) merge house and garden together.

The roof presented no difficulty, though the wavy section

of the English pantile produces a lighter texture than the semi-cylindrical Latin tile. For the walls, which in the type would be of white or colour-washed plaster on crude bricks, there has been substituted not too evenly gauged brickwork washed over with white distemper, producing a rich texture (Fig. 3), and the desired contrast of light and shade with the arches and overhanging eaves. The introduction of the Clipsham stone dressings, of a rich buff colour, seems to have been suggested partly to enrich the texture of the walls and partly to provide a framework to the design by which the classical affinities of the style could be worked in. It has certainly enabled the design to be more clearly defined than would have been the case in whitewashed brick alone, and to be more architectural in character. Such incidents as the combination of arcade and pergola in Fig. 3, the concave *patera* in the spandrels of the arches, and the little tapered buttresses of the pavilions, which give so much of its character to the design, are attractive ideas



7.—THE STAIRS AND FIRST FLOOR CORRIDOR



8.—THE BREAKFAST ROOM IN A PAVILION

deriving from the introduction of stone. Taken with the handling of the courtyard and outbuildings illustrated last week, in which the same process of disintegration and reconstitution was employed as described in relation to the garden front, the design of Ridgemoor can be regarded as an unusually thoughtful and sensitive piece of work attaining legitimate individuality by the imaginative handling of the factors and materials involved. It is precisely this method of approaching the problems raised by each house that gives such variety and vitality to the work of Sir Edwin Lutyens through half a century. (It has given me a shock to realise that his earliest building goes back to the 'eighties!) What is so encouraging is to find the son following, not (as so often happens in such cases) the superficial idioms of the father, but the method, and attaining a result that, while in no sense a copy, is an unmistakable Lutyens product.

It was said in the previous article, moreover, that Mr. Robert Lutyens has in a sense developed Sir Edwin's technique further, in relation to "modern" requirements. This applies principally to a marked "opening out" of the plan to afford readier access to the open air with loggias, sleeping-porch, etc. The plan of Ridgemoor is well worth study in other respects too. Whereas the entry front has a single axis—that of the front door—the garden side has three, owing to the grouping of the main living-rooms at the southern end with the "patio" in front of them. The central axis on this side has been kept carefully subordinate, but is given a parallel garden vista, while the third, appertaining to the service rooms, is suppressed externally. The transition from one grouping system to the other is very ingeniously effected by means of shallow parallel halls so that, turning to the right on entering the front door (Fig. 5), we are shepherded diagonally to another passage-like



9.—IN THE DINING-ROOM

Elsewhere the treatment is lighter in key, as in the delightful little breakfast room (Fig. 8) in one of the pavilions adjoining the garden front. On the bedroom floor a single wide passage runs from end to end, with windows opening westward on to a balcony above the vestibule. Each pair of bed and dressing-rooms has a bathroom. Where space is limited the American pattern of diagonal tub is used, which fits into spaces where the longer English bath will not go. In Mrs. Barnato's bathroom, however, there is space for more elaborate treatment. Four guest-rooms are also grouped in the south-west wing over the squash court and garage.

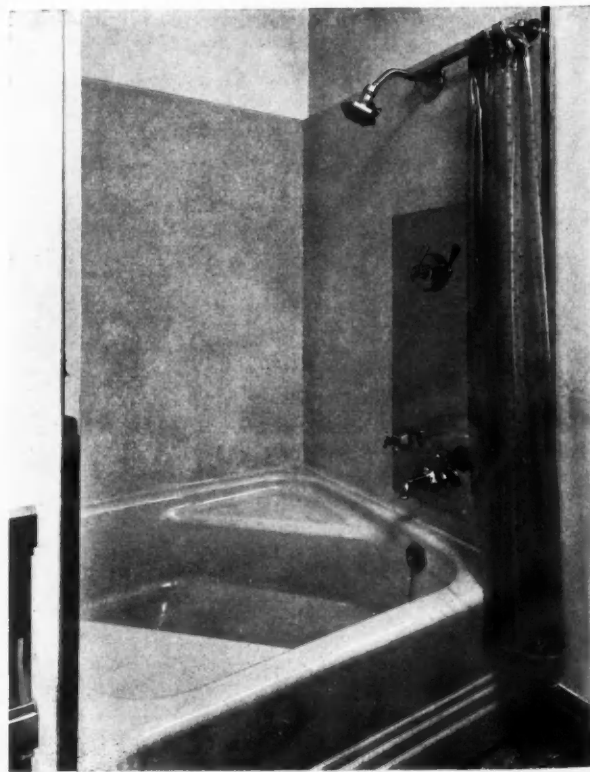
Pilot Officer R. Lutyens is now serving his country in other ways than architecture. He wrote to me recently: "Ridgemoor may very likely be my spring-song and swan-song combined. . . . If only I have the chance, I know I can go on to better work and keep father's idiom alive in contemporary building. His genius is inimitable, also his invention. But I feel convinced I could do a lot to resolve antagonisms between the worlds of yesterday and to-morrow." Ridgemoor seems to support that aspiration, and many readers of COUNTRY LIFE will like to join in wishing him "Good luck, and all power to your elbow."

CHRISTOPHER HUSSEY.



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10.—MRS. BARNATO'S BATHROOM



11.—A DIAGONAL TUB IN A GUEST'S BATHROOM

hall (Fig. 6). This is, derivatively, the vestigial survivor of the large central hall of tradition, with the three principal living-rooms, the stairs, a garden exit and the passage to the service rooms opening off it, the two last serving also as flower room and gunroom respectively. The treatment of these passage halls carries on the Mission note—whitewashed plaster, masonry, and stout woodwork, all three of which get more scope in the staircase hall (Fig. 7). The theme is developed in the living-rooms, as, for instance, in the dining-room (Fig. 9) and in the fittings of some of the bedrooms (Fig. 10).

"Country Life"

THE WOOD FIRE

FROM the ancient days of pre-history down to the time of Queen Anne the home-fire was generally a wood fire upon which big logs were burnt. The arrival of cheap coal, which required less continual attention when burning and could be stored in a smaller space, led to a quick change-over to the dirtier material in the towns. In the country the wood fire lingered in farm and cottage until the Great War; but at the present time, though little chunks of wood are commonly enough used as a stop-gap among the coals, a real wood fire is a rare sight indeed. This is strange, because the wood, with all its drawbacks, has many distinct advantages over coal, and the central heating plant has now come in as an ideal partner which effectively takes care of the weak point of the wood fire. This is the likelihood of the fire dying down when left unattended, so that one returns to a cold house. Probably the chief reason why it has not returned to favour as one of the most comforting amenities of the modern country house is that the architects of to-day are often unfamiliar with the somewhat complicated installation necessary to provide a hearth which will ensure that the logs burn brightly even when doors and windows are closed and, whatever the direction of the wind, does not ever smoke. Perhaps another is that country-house owners are afraid that the sawing of the wood will add to their labour outlay, and this they naturally wish to avoid at all costs. In actual fact sawing cord-wood into the three-foot lengths required for a proper wood fire provides an ideal wet-weather occupation for the outdoor workers so long as a suitable shed with either a power-driven saw and bench or a couple of the new quick-action frame saws and sawing-horses are available. In this way the labour legitimately chargeable to the fuel account becomes a very small item and the health and comfort of the workers is much improved, for they are spared many a soaking, bound to bring its trail of colds and rheumatism.

As a fire to sit by I think all will be agreed that the old "down fire" of wood is quite in a class by itself; it seems to radiate sociability, hospitality and cosiness along with the infra-red rays that warm and comfort, and the delicious aromatic aroma that permeates gently over the whole house, giving it an atmosphere that remains long and pleasantly in the memory. Another important point about this old-fashioned system is that it is a great saver of labour in that the tedious and messy work of clearing out a grate full of cinders and then laying a fire of paper, sticks and coals is avoided. This is a particularly valuable feature where a wood fire is used in a bedroom, because in the morning, instead of having to wait until this tiresome operation has been done, all that is necessary to have a good fire roaring again is to rake over the ash, put together a few of the still glowing pieces that are sure to be available provided that the fire has been well banked up at night, reset the logs and apply the bellows.

It was the late Mr. William Robinson, the founder of *Garden-illustrated*, who first showed me the heated-draught system which is so effective in preventing any smoke entering the room, and is, indeed, almost a necessity if the fire is to be a real success. Briefly it consists in leading in a supply of cold air from outside by means of a duct formed of a six-inch sheet-metal pipe passing under the floorboards to a point below the centre of the hearth. This hearth is formed of iron or steel plate. A good size is three feet at the back widening to four feet six inches at the front, the depth being two feet. Smaller fires need too much attention. Under this hearthplate an air-space of two inches is left over the whole area. The purpose of this space is to act as a heating chamber for the cool air from outside. The heated air is then led up two pipes, one on either side, concealed behind the brick sides of the fireplace. Then the pipes bend inwards behind the mantel to discharge at the danger-point where smoke would otherwise pour into the room. It will readily be seen that the powerful upward draught thus ensured prevents any possibility of the fire smoking. Another essential is to have the hearth raised about nine inches above the floor level and to make provision to prevent the ash falling into the fender by forming a ledge about four inches high across the front of the hearth.

The furnishings required include a cast-iron fireback, a pair of dogs or andirons, a large pair of serviceable bellows, an iron bar to lie across the front of the dogs to prevent a log falling into the fender, a pair of large tongs for adjusting large logs, a pair of very small but well made tongs for the most important attention of all, that of adjusting small glowing coals that become displaced, and a hearth brush and shovel. A basket to hold the "pimps," little faggots of dry twigs about a foot long used for lighting the fire, and a wrought-iron log cradle complete the equipment. The local smith will probably be able to provide all the items mentioned.

In order to keep a good fire going well an understanding of how it works is helpful. The fire burns from front to back, consequently a fresh log should always be put on at the back, the existing back log being moved forward. Generally speaking, three logs are the rule, the back log being in process of preparing itself for burning by a final drying and heating rather than actually actively burning, the middle log burning brightly to the fullest extent and the front log nearly burnt away but glowing fiercely. On returning to the room after an absence of some time and finding the fire low, the inexperienced fireman's natural instinct is at once to throw on a large log and apply the bellows. A much more effective method is to gather up the "coals" of charcoal carefully with the small tongs first and then to rearrange the remaining logs above them before adding fresh fuel. In nine cases out of ten the fire will burn up brightly at once without recourse to the bellows.

It is unnecessary, and indeed even highly undesirable, to remove the accumulation of wood ash oftener than every six months or so, when about a bucketful may be taken away to be handed over to the gardener, who values it highly for the potash it contains.

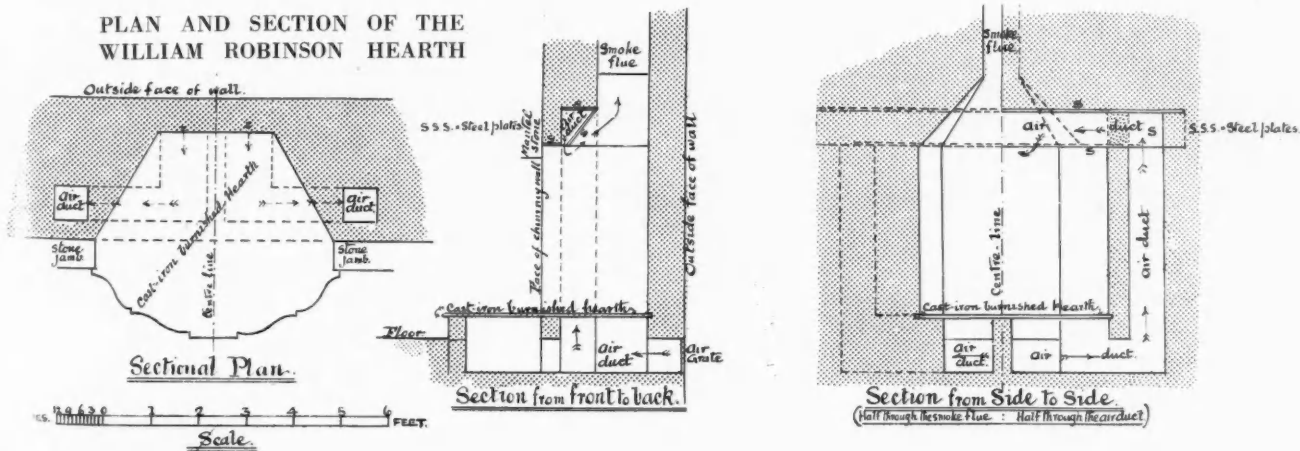
All kinds of English woods will burn if the fire is large enough, but their behaviour under combustion differs widely. With nearly all the commoner species available I have no hesitation in saying that a mixture of two-thirds beech to one-third oak is by far the best. Of the other useful woods for fuel one might place apple, holly, hornbeam, birch, alder, ash when green, and elm, in about that order. The wood should remain six months in the forest after felling, and then one year under cover in a roofed shed with open sides, before receiving the final sawing, when it is ready for use.

It is regrettable that to-day, in spite of the vogue for "Tudor" and "modern Tudor" houses, architects so seldom make use of the decorative feature provided by a wood fire. But there have been certain brilliant exceptions, among which may be recalled M. Adnet's magnificent centrally placed circular wood fire in a bay of the great hall of his "Auberge pour la Jeunesse" at the last Paris Exhibition. The fire burned on a large raised circular grating with an ash-door at the bottom and a great ring-shaped settee surrounding it. It was like a superlative camp-fire, and one could imagine the circle of tired feet from mountain, lake, or perhaps only tennis court, propped towards its comforting blaze while the day's doings were talked over in after-dinner ease. Above, suspended from the ceiling apparently only by its own brick flue, hung a monstrous cowl, presumably assisted in its work by a forced draught. It is to be hoped that this fine room has been actually built somewhere, according to the model, for surely no raconteur of camp-fire stories could wish for a better setting for the exercise of his art.

MICHAEL HAWORTH-BOOTH.



PLAN AND SECTION OF THE
WILLIAM ROBINSON HEARTH



"TRENCHER-FED"

MEASURES WHICH MAY
BE NECESSARY FOR
HUNTING'S FUTURE

A CHARACTERISTIC SCENE IN THE
BORDER COUNTRY. BOLTING A
FOX



THE war makes some people pessimistic about the possibility of maintaining fox-hunting in the years to come. There is no doubt that in many respects hunting faces a precarious future, a fact which is re-echoed by a huntsman friend of mine of long standing, who writes: "I am glad that I am not starting my career just now."

Faced with crushing taxation, falling subscriptions, increased costs, black-out regulations, and the control of oats and oatmeal, the lot of the Master of Hounds of to-day is far from being a happy one.

But that is not to say that hunting will cease or that the countryside will forget the look of scarlet glancing over the hedges, or black, white and tan pouring forth from covert, copse or brown beech wood.

History really does very often repeat itself, and if the war continues for any length of time it is more than possible that many packs will revert to the simple ways of our ancestors and become "trencher-fed." Perhaps to the younger generation the latter term requires elucidation. It means simply that the pack is kept

unkennelled on farms or cottages, inns or steadings, and either collected the night before hunting, or each supporter brings his hound to the meet in the manner described by Surtees in the opening chapter of "Handley Cross." Here is his description of those days: "Upon any particular morning that was fixed for a hunt each man might be seen wending his way to the meet followed by his dog or bringing him along in a string."

This method of hunting a country is cheap enough, and valuable lessons in these lean times may be learned from the story of the past. Even when that fine figure of a British yeoman, Michael Hardy, took over the Handley Cross hounds in the Vale of Sheepwash, "the hounds were kept at walk during the summer . . . and all was done by subscription, some gave Michael cash, some gave him corn, some hay, others straw, and all the old horses in the country found their way to his farm."

Very much the same sort of thing is happening to-day, for with many packs the farmers are supplying the Hunt horses with forage and assisting in other ways what used to be their own particular sport.

It must be admitted that a trencher-fed pack has not the evenness of a kennelled one under disciplined and experienced Hunt servants, nor as a rule do they possess any uniformity of condition; but, more important to my point, they hunt well, and as a rule show a lot of sport. Only those who have witnessed it can credit the sagacity evinced by trencher-fed hounds in knowing the hunting mornings, placing themselves ready for the summons or rushing with joyous cries to meet the Hunt messenger. They are always ready to hunt, as are many of the Welsh packs to this day, and as were the old Haydon hounds when that picturesque character Robert Bruce wound his long horn on Haydon Bridge a hundred years ago.

Like other packs with a long history, the Haydon were for many years trencher fed; they hunted both fox and hare, and the Hunt expenses rarely totalled more than £40 per annum.

I read in the old Hunt diary in my possession how, in 1834, each member kept a hound. There were thirteen couples in all, two Towlers, Countesses and Rubys in the pack, and yet in the next season on December 19th, 1835, hounds met at West Dipton, and the diary tells us: "A fox killed at Hindley Dean after a splendid chase of not less than thirty miles, which was run in 3 hours 10 minutes." So that is what a trencher-fed pack could do!

There is not the slightest doubt that in those days of the warm bygone when each man who walked a hound felt he had a vested interest and right to assist in the proceedings in the field, there was a charming and deep-seated family feeling permeating the countryside. When men spoke of "our hounds" they did so in the possessive sense. So long as this feeling continues all is well with hunting. Once let it fail and the whole structure falls to the ground.

This family feeling to which reference is made is particularly strong with the hunts of Lakeland, those on the Welsh borders, and those two sterling packs, the Border and North Tyne, who show wonderful sport in extremely difficult countries. Out in the heart of the Cheviots, that land of heath and moss, rock and tussock, the lean, grizzled white hounds of the Border kill their fifty brace of foxes a season. After a hunt with them you must be a dull dog indeed if you do not respond to this strange wild sport when the white hounds streak across wine-dark moors and up the brown hillsides and the wind brings back their merry clamour and the ceaseless "For-it! For-r-rit!" of a Robson or a Dodd, kings and prime ministers of this land of the sheep



THE CONISTON HOUNDS WITH THEIR HUNTSMAN
AT KENNELS. The Fell pack are only kennelled during
the hunting season, being trencher-fed at walk in summer

and the curlew, the peat-pools and the moors speckled like a woodcock's breast.

The enthusiasm for hill-hunting and absence of fashion and parade is well described by Will H. Ogilvie when he sings of:

Mark you that group as it stands by the stell!
Here is no ponderous pride,
Here is no swagger, no place for the swell,
But a handful of fellows who'll ride
A fox to his death over upland and fell,
Where a hundred good foxes have died.

Then the Bilsdale and Farndale show a lot of sport in countries which many would consider impracticable for hunting at all. The latter is trencher fed, and the former only kennelled in make-shift kennels during the winter. Hunting costs little, and yet everyone enjoys the sport—plain, simple, and with a homely tang.

Nor would it do many packs any harm to go back to the old days once known in the Cleveland country when the pack was a trencher-fed one. That there was a definite co-ordination of interest is proved by the old rule of the Cleveland Friendly Society whereby each member had to "publicly lay his Right Hand upon a Hunting-Horn and declare himself no enemy to Fox-hunting and Harriers and endeavour to discover all Poachers." The rule indeed might be copied with advantage to-day.

In the light of these arguments and as proving the relatively cheap costs of hunting under simple and economic ideals, is it not a practicable proposition that hunting in the main can be saved by a return to such methods? Trencher-fed hounds would cost very little to keep, the Hunt horses could be "summered" by supporters and in the season stabled at some convenient farm. And, more important still, each supporter, his wife and family,

would feel that they had a stake in the concern. Life in the country during war-time can be drab enough at all times, but do not the periodic meets of hounds provide alike an inspiration and a relaxation from toil?

The opinion may be advanced that hounds trencher-fed would not be in as good condition as those kept in kennel. It may well be so, yet they would receive the scraps of the farm and any amount of bones, or a run at the pig-pail. I do not think that they would take much harm, they might indeed be a little riotous, but that would soon be corrected by a good huntsman, who, in the time he could spare from war work, could ride or drive round to see his favourites.

It may be mentioned that the renowned Robert Luther, who hunted the rough United country—and it is rough, as Mr. C. N. de Courcy Parry, the present Master, who, although over age, is now on active service, will bear witness—hunted twice a week from September to April, and always had a "tally" of five and twenty brace of noses. His hounds were always fed by himself on "the offal of the farm and tail ends," as he expressed it. Yet the fact is on record that his dog-hounds could be heard by those who stood on the hills, "like a peal of Lancashire bell-ringers." Such an example is well worth following, and to my mind the scheme outlined of hounds being trencher-fed is one of the ways in which democracy will still be able to participate—I use the words of Surtees: "in the great British drama called the fox-hunt—in which every man can take a part without note or invitation."

Postscript.—Since writing this, I hear that the South Durham pack, which hunt Ralph Lambton's old country, is being disbanded, and that there is every likelihood that it will become a trencher-fed pack.

WILLIAM FAWCETT.

PITY THE POOR POSTMAN

The author, postman in an outlying district of Shropshire, describes some of his experiences during the recent frost, which inevitably affected with peculiar severity men of his calling.

"A—H—we never have a good old-fashioned winter. Times be changed. Years ago we had frost an' snow—ay, plenty of it for weeks together; but now—why, summer an' winter be a'most alike."

This is the kind of statement I often heard old people make. During the last few weeks the schoolboys in the Rea Valley and on the slopes of Cleve (prompted by a nod and a wink from me) have questioned some of the old people who talk of the hard winters of sixty and seventy years ago, and I have joined in the questioning. Many of the old folks revived their memories of the thirteen weeks of frost in 1895; one old man with a wonderful memory wandered back into 1863! I do not doubt that these old countrymen do remember many bitterly cold and hard winters; I have read a good deal about them. I was interested to find that R. D. Blackmore, in "Lorna Doone," wrote of an even earlier winter: "That night such a frost ensued as we had never dreamed of, neither read in ancient books, or histories of Frobisher. The kettle by the fire froze, and the crock upon the hearth-checks; many men were killed, and cattle rigid in their head-ropes. Then I heard that fearful sound, which never I had heard before, neither since have heard (except during the same winter), the sharp yet solemn sound of trees burst open by the frost-blow. Our great walnut lost three branches, and has been dying ever since; though growing meanwhile as the soul does."

However, not one of the old men with whom I talked—and one was hale and hearty at ninety-eight—could recall such an unusual frost as the one which covered the countryside on the last Sunday in January, 1940. This frost held for some time, and I must admit that, for my part, I found little joy on my long daily walks.

"To see," as a farmer friend of mine put it, "Mother England under a hard white shroud for so long dunna help to kep a mon happy an' hearty-like."

I agree. I find no pleasure in looking at the white, deserted fields, at telegraph poles snapped off at ground level like rotten carrots, and the ice-covered wires like giant lace, all tangled and torn, straggling over and about the hedgerows. That strange magic of the first snow of winter was not there. To stand and stare at ruined orchards and woodlands is cheerless and depressing. Damson trees are brittle, almost every one, certainly every orchard, has suffered. The branches of many tall trees, weighted with ice, hang down broken at the main stem or torn right away. Indeed, so badly damaged are the woods and spinneys, I cannot recognise them as the woods and spinneys I have looked at every day for many years.

There is something uncanny, almost frightening, about the crash of falling trees in a silent, apparently petrified countryside. There is no bird song, no sound of sheep or cattle, no hard *tap!* of the woodman's axe, and yet, suddenly, in the dead silence, perhaps from the heart of the wood, perhaps from only a few yards away, comes the slow heavy crash, a crash difficult to describe. For me it is a fearful sound, no power devised by man can prevent it; it is like the loud cry of a giant, a peaceful giant, as he falls never to rise again. I seem to feel the heavy stumble as he staggers and sways, as he breaks away the branches of big

trees, smashes smaller ones down with him, and then his own great branches crash to the floor of the wood and break with a rending sound, a last cry of despair from one who has stood upright and unafraid for perhaps two hundred years or more in sun and rain, in snow and frost.

How the farmers feel about it all when they look out at the land and see no green "keep" for their stock, and the fruit trees and woodlands all broken, twisted and torn, I do not know. They are sometimes called a race of grumblers, but the truth is, through this unusually hard winter I have found them surprisingly cheerful. They talk of their difficulties and trials—and they are real enough—but they are not down-hearted. It may be that, in their hearts, they know that "nature never did betray the heart that loved her." Better weather and better times will come. Surely it was a woman who understood the mind of a farmer's wife who wrote of another love the farmer had, a rival who kept him out of doors:

And year by year she has betrayed him
With blight and mildew, rain and drought,
Smut, scab, and murrain, all the rout;
But he forgets the tricks she's played him

When first
The fields give a good smell and the leaves put out.

Amid all the desolation on the hills and in the dales I saw, here and there, some scenes of beauty that I may never see again. Young larch trees, stiff and upright, with their branches and young, almost tendril-like shoots, all encased in ice. They seemed to be some part of a Hans Andersen story, or a picture in a vivid dream. I crossed the corner of a meadow, touched them, and plucked an ice-covered cone.

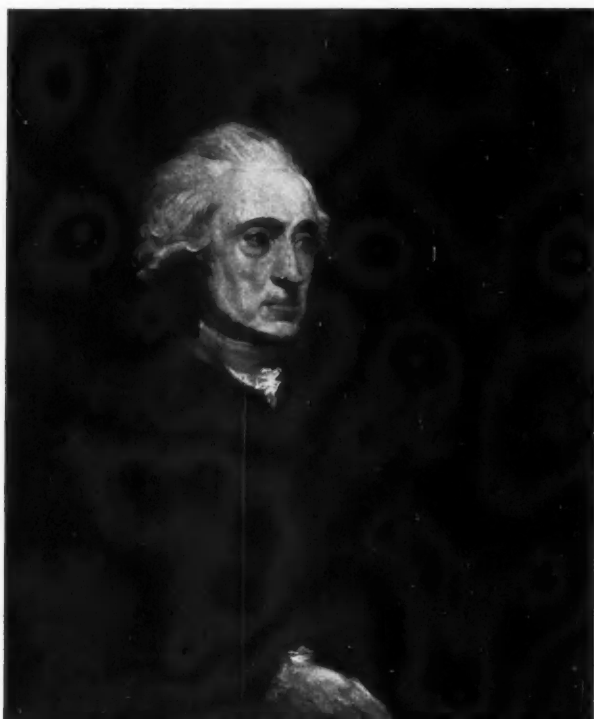
Every stem and blade of the coarse grasses and all kinds of tough undergrowth were inside clear ice; as I walked over a stretch of rough ground there was a crackling sound: it was as if I kicked long glass fingers at every stride. Neen Brook, clear and sparkling, babbled and chuckled beneath boughs heavy with ice, the steep banks were cascades of fairy-like trailing briars, some snow white, others like ropes of glass with green, brown or reddish centres.

What I saw in one narrow lane was worth all the energy I spent, and all the effort I made, to reach the end of my long walk. The hedge banks of this lane are high, and the hedges, for the most part, are of withy, hazel and dogwood, all very pliable. The weight of ice covering the branches and twigs had drawn them inwards so that they met overhead or drooped down to the level of the lane. I walked as well as I could, in places I crawled on my hands and knees, under a long archway or corridor of crystal-clear ice. The colours of the branches and twigs could be seen through the ice and, here and there, when I looked upwards, I saw bright splashes of red; these were made by hips and haws, they appeared to be unusually large, and every one was encased in a globe of ice about the size of a cherry—transparent cherries with red hearts! This glass corridor—as I shall always think of it—with all its colours and curves, was a wonderful sight. Every bit of it, twig and bush, grass and leaf, the road below me and the banks around me, were covered, encased, in hard crystal-clear ice.

SIMON EVANS.

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

GHOSTS OF NORBURY



WILLIAM LOCK I AND MRS. LOCK, FROM PAINTINGS BY SIR THOMAS LAWRENCE

From THE LOCKS OF NORBURY, by the Duchess of Sermoneta. (Murray, 18s.)

THE new Dorking-Leatherhead motor road has encroached on the bottom of Norbury Park, but has opened the view for passers-by up its steep slopes to the lovely hanging beechwoods of the "Druids' Grove." Thanks to the Surrey County Council and the National Trust, this exquisite landscape has been saved from "development," and the house itself, though somewhat changed, is in private hands that safeguard the famous "landscape room." And now, as nearly the last descendant of the almost legendary family whose home it was, the Duchess of Sermoneta has opened up and preserved the strange story, in all its fascinating ramifications, of which this idyllic landscape was more than the background.

Like most others who passed through the Mickleham valley, I used for years to try to catch a glimpse of what lay over the high fence of Norbury, curiosity whetted by the beauty of the inaccessible woods and the frequent, tantalising references to "Mr. Lock of Norbury" in so many memoirs and artistic records of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In those days everybody seemed to hold the family in extraordinary veneration, and one of them was apparently a remarkable amateur artist, a few of whose slight but extremely sensitive drawings one sometimes comes across in collections and museums. Then, one day on the Lake of Como, I had the pleasure of meeting the Duchess of Sermoneta, when conversation chanced to turn—to my surprise at the time, but now I see how naturally—to the Locks of Norbury. For the third and last of them met a tragic death before the distracted eyes of his wife and child in those very waters beside which I was talking to that child's granddaughter exactly a hundred years later.

No wonder Norbury still casts a spell. The affections of a family, of whom every individual seems to have been uncommonly handsome and gifted, and of an ardent spirit, were concentrated in that park for

forty years. William Lock I, whose antecedents are still not clear beyond that he appears to have been the illegitimate child of a certain William Lock, M.P. for Grimsby, first appears as an early friend and patron in Italy of the painter Richard Wilson, whom he may have been responsible for turning from portraiture to landscape. The story is not improbable, for William Lock's artistic soul was only content in an Arcadian setting, a perfect example of which he created round him at Norbury and retired into with a beautiful and universally beloved wife for the rest of his life in 1774. There Mr. and Mrs. Lock brought up a family of four handsome sons and two beautiful daughters in a fastidious atmosphere of pictures, music, and books, and received the intelligentsia of the day. Their most intimate friends were Fanny Burney and her sister, both of whom

settled on the edge of the park, and whose letters give us many enchanting glimpses of those long, happy years.

"The sweet and most bewitching Mrs. Lock, Mrs. Thrale, and Mrs. Delaney," says Fanny, "in their several ways, possess the joint power of winning the affections while they delight the intellects to the highest summit I can even conceive of human attraction."

Mr. Lock has been all himself: all instruction, information, and intelligence."

"I have heard," said Queen Charlotte, "that they are all sensible and amiable and ingenious in that family. I cannot help feeling interested whenever I only hear her name." To a company including artists like Fuseli and the young Thomas Lawrence (who was to be a life-long friend of the next generation), Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Mrs. Delaney, and Julius Angerstein (his son married one of the daughters), were added the celebrated French refugees, among them Mme. de Staël and Talleyrand, living at Juniper Hall. The noisy world was kept remote from the clever, happy family circle that made music and read aloud in the painted room, while the handsome young William drew their portraits, or they rode about



THE BEAUTIFUL ELIZABETH JENNINGS, WIFE OF WILLIAM LOCK II, BY LAWRENCE

the downs, or made trinkets for the family stall at Leatherhead Fair.

All accounts agree that Mr. and Mrs. Lock radiated a serene spiritual goodness besides maintaining an edifying level of thought, and so long as the family remained at Norbury within their aura they and all whom they brought within it seem to have been conscious of living in a charmed circle. But outside it the children, as they grew up, were not all of them equal to the hard realities of life. Charles, the second son, married a sister of the Irish patriot Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and, going as British Consul to Naples, had to cope with Emma and Nelson. As a descendant of one of their victims, the Duchess of Sermoneta is not disposed to conceal the sordidness of that unworthy episode, which Charles's hitherto unpublished letters show in all its shamefulness. Poor Charles! An inveterate sightseer, he died at Malta of a fever contracted when visiting the plains of Troy. Even the divine William the younger sometimes struck so loyal a friend as Thomas Lawrence as opinionated and churlish. He seems to have suffered from repression by his too virtuous parents and been embittered by his failure to fulfil as a painter the promise of his draughtsman-ship. He comes down to us as something like one of his own drawings: a brilliant outline without substance or colour.

When William Lock I died, and the younger William, unable to afford to keep up Norbury, sold the family home, the spell broke. Troubles and tragedy dogged the Locks. He himself withdrew with his family to Paris, spending his days among the Old Masters in the Louvre, and, lacking Norbury's steadying atmosphere, the children ran into debt or married impossible husbands. Unsatisfactory as their lives were, they none the less give the Duchess of Sermoneta material for vivid pictures of early nineteenth-century life in Ireland, London, Genoa, and Paris. Selina Tollemache, the girl-wife who saw the handsome young Guardsman, William Locke III, drowned in Como in 1830, lived till 1892, and her great-granddaughter remembers her well. Their daughter, the last of the Locks, after being the acknowledged beauty of King Bomba's Naples, married the late Lord Walsingham, the celebrated sportsman. Cousins and second cousins spread the links with Norbury through many Victorian country houses and Italian *palazzos*.

It is an enormous canvas that the Duchess of Sermoneta covers, crowded with vivid characters, the more distant and notable no less *vraisemblable* than those she has seen and known. While reading her admirably related chronicle, illustrated with masterpieces by Thomas Lawrence, we have the authentic feeling of the lovely ghosts of Norbury brought to glowing life again around us.

It was inevitable that, in so crowded a scene, there should be a few slips among the less important characters. The son of the Earls of Dysart is Lord Huntingtower (not Huntington). The painter Sawrey Gilpin, who helped to paint the landscape room at Norbury, seems to be confused with the Rev. William Gilpin, the picturesque tourist who was also a friend of the Locks. The Mr. Payne Knight who browbeat William Lock II at the

Committee of Taste on the memorial to Nelson at the Guildhall was not, as stated, J. P. Knight, R.A., but the well known *dilettante*. They are mentioned only to imply the extent of the researches that the Duchess of Sermoneta has made in producing this enthralling chronicle of a remarkable family's life and friendships.

CHRISTOPHER HUSSEY.

PERSONALITY AND ART

It is fashionable to depreciate Winifred Holtby as an artist. *TESTAMENT OF FRIENDSHIP* by Miss Vera Brittain (Macmillan, 10s. 6d.), should be a valuable corrective. Yet, strangely enough, it is not what the author writes that convinces us of the power, expressed and latent, in her subject. For Miss Brittain's picture of her friend tends towards an anxious exaggeration, an almost strident showmanship. She allows neither for the fact that posterity takes its own way with reputations nor for the bitter truth expressed by Charles Morgan: "Face the consequences; you are the cause of them." So Miss Brittain excuses Winifred Holtby overmuch for the distractions that kept her from uninterrupted literary work; she also tells posterity what is to be its verdict, as when she writes of future literary pilgrims visiting Winifred Holtby's grave, or confidently remarks, "Already her *South Riding* shows signs of becoming as well known a literary district as Thomas Hardy's *Wessex*." But whenever Winifred Holtby herself speaks or writes in this book, we acknowledge something—and sometimes all—of what Miss Brittain would have us acknowledge. There was a vitality, largeness, humour, modesty, self-criticism and passionate love of truth in Winifred Holtby that belong to greatness or potential greatness. There are also an excellent astringency native to her thought, though usually checked by her tongue. For instance, she once said, "Everybody's tragedy is somebody's nuisance." The mind capable of facing a truth like that is capable of much else. Again, she had the artist's capacity or, rather, the artist's necessity to stand alone. She could be and was all things to others, and she loved one man all her life though she never married him; but the warmth of her approach to people was for their sakes, not for her own; she had, however masked by sympathy, the essential detachment that denotes the artist. So, because of the evidence supplied by Winifred Holtby herself, Miss Brittain largely persuades us. Winifred Holtby lived so intensely partly because her disease was making her live herself out, like a fire with no dampers; but, at thirty-seven, she had lived long enough to show both what she could write best and what she was on the way to writing.

V. H. F.

JOURNALISTIC CAVALCADE

THE DAY BEFORE, which has provided Mr. H. M. Tomlinson with the title of his latest work (Heinemann, 9s. net), is the period before the last war. He describes it in a medium which is half way between fact and fiction—obviously fictitious, that is, so far as material happenings are concerned, but no less obviously autobiographical in such things as moods and memories. His hero—if, indeed, so shadowy a figure as Venner can lay claim to so definite a title—makes a dramatic departure from a job in the City very much as did his prototype in the same author's "Gallions Reach." In the latter case the door which opened to him gave upon Eastern seas; in this instance it is upon Fleet Street, and the result is what might perhaps be termed as a sort of journalistic "Cavalcade," including in its purview such portents as the appearance



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THE LANDSCAPE ROOM AT NORBURY PARK

"Country Life"

of the first airship over London, a glimpse—a little disappointing, considering its authorship—of Fleet exercises immediately before the war, and a description of the loss of the *Titanic*. Did the generation who definitely belonged to the "day before" ever feel any premonition of the terrific birth lying hid in the womb of their to-morrow? Mr. Tomlinson seems to suggest that they did, in spite of the note on which his book closes—"Don't know the place. Servia. Never heard of it before. Sarajevo." Altogether this is an odd, elusive, occasionally provocative book; and if its people have an irritating habit of evading any attempt to get at close quarters with them, the people here are for once only incidents. It is the background that matters, and with that few will be inclined to quarrel.

C. FOX SMITH.

LADY SARAH LENNOX

Charm, like the scent of a flower, is real without being explicable. It is Miss King-Hall's chief success that in *LADY SARAH* (Peter Davies, 8s. 6d.) she has captured a long-dead woman's charm and confined it between her pages. Anyone with a historical imagination could have brought before us the brilliant eighteenth-century scene of Court and society; there is drama and to spare, too, in the life of Lady Sarah Lennox

herself, who was the youngest daughter of the second Duke of Richmond and so nearly became the wife of George II. But to make us feel in Lady Sarah what her contemporaries felt is as hard as to revive, for those born too late, the quality of an actor; and Miss King-Hall has done it. In her book we see and know for ourselves that Lady Sarah was a darling: frank, sparkling, spontaneous, warm-hearted, generous, unaffected by ambition, unspoiled by her own beauty or birth. She was loving and lovable, first in good fortune, then in ill, and finally in the happiest of fairy-tale endings. She possessed, and the author has portrayed it, the one kind of nature that is irresistible; for she was good (in spite of stooping once to folly) without ever being dull.

V. H. F.

A SELECTION FOR THE LIBRARY LIST

THE EAGER YEARS, by Lennox Kerr (Collins, 10s. 6d.); *SURVEYORS' TREK*, by David Anderson (Faber, 10s. 6d.); *THIS ROME OF OURS*, by Augusta L. Francis (Rich and Cowan, 8s. 6d.); *Fiction: SO FRAIL A THING*, by Helen Beauclerk (Gollancz, 8s. 3d.); *CHORUS OF CLOWNS*, by Eden Phillpotts (Methuen, 8s. 3d.); *Anthology: WORD FROM ENGLAND*, by Lieut.-Gen. Sir Tom Bridges (English University Press, 6s.).

GOLF BY BERNARD DARWIN

BACK TO THE LAST WAR

IN, I think, the first golfing article after the outbreak of this war I tentatively remarked that perhaps some day I might hark back to my golf in the last one, played on the Vardar marshes in Macedon. Now seems to be the time when there is, as I write, no golf at all owing to what I trust the Censor will allow me to call "the recent cold spell." Moreover, it was the one bright spot in an otherwise drab existence, so that, at a safe distance, I like looking back on it; it *was* good fun. I played altogether on seven courses in that accursed and interesting country. I saw an eighth, and at the time I wished I hadn't. It consisted almost entirely of nullahs full of bully beef tins, and I wrote a possibly offensive article about it and its players in *The Times*. A nurse, presumably enamoured of one of the players, resented the article and insisted on the return of a particularly attractive spoon which, through an intermediary, I had borrowed from her. Of some of the seven I can only recollect the names and assuredly could not now spell them. The one that I loved as the child of my own brain was near the base at Dudular, and though I did lay it out I will assert that it was far from a bad one. The turf in winter—and golf was a winter game—was, for playing through the green, perfect, for it had an encouraging bristle in it, never met elsewhere, which made the ball sit up. It might have been too bristly for perfect greens, but that did not matter, as we had no greens. The course was too near a road along which passed the Commander-in-Chief; he would have been "very fierce" if he had seen soldiers making putting greens, and very possibly he would have been right. So we just cut a hole, and got into it with lofting irons as best we could. We envied rather bitterly a friendly course at a hospital for Serbians near by. They had beautiful greens; but then, nobody could see what they were at. In winter, when the fiend of malaria was dormant, there was, so we malignantly said, one medical officer for each patient. At nine o'clock the M.O. looked at his patient; at half a minute past he heard what his temperature was; at one minute past he told the sister to carry on, and then, for the rest of the day, there was the golf course. No wonder they had good greens.

Our ground was flat, with some gentle undulations—just what it ought to be—and our hazards, though few, were of a most orthodox description; a road and a railway that St. Andrews would not have despised, some patches of rushes, and a water hazard that guarded one flank of the course. St. Andrews certainly would have despised, though old Tooting Bec would not, our only "artificial" hazards, tall perpendicular ramparts for the sheltering of sheep from the wind. We had sixteen holes, playing one of them twice from different angles, and this one was on the best natural "island" green I ever saw; quite small, slightly saucer-shaped, but with the ground falling away on every side into marshy troubles. That made two admirable short holes, and there was another very pretty one on a peninsula jutting out into the water. There was one two-shotter, which I recollect with parental pride as making full use of both road and railway. First we drove over the railway, cutting off as big a chunk as we dared, to find ourselves in a narrow strath with the railway on our left and the road on our right, and a second shot to be struck straight and true between the pair. There was another hole which many people might think dull. Some misguided people think the Dowie hole at Hoylake dull, and a great man who ought to have known better said that it looked like a hole you might find on Clapham Common. If there were many such on Clapham Common I would never ask to play anywhere else. At any rate my hole was made in pious imitation. It was a "long one-shotter" needing a wooden club. The tee was close to the railway, which was on the

player's left, thus corresponding to the out-of-bounds at the Dowie: so was the green. There was nothing else at all, but then, except for the patch of rushes, there used to be not much else at the Dowie, and many think that that hole has been not at all improved by the bunkers on the right. At any rate, mine was a very hard hole to play: not hard to get a four at, or perhaps a three with a run-up and a putt, but an extraordinarily hard one at which to attain artistic perfection. To hit a full shot dead straight on to that green, skirting the railway for the whole flight of the ball, was a desperate task: one tried as a rule to bring it in with a hook from the right, or sometimes, greatly daring, to hit the ball out over the railway and let it drift back into safety at the end of its flight. Either of those was a feat to bring satisfaction and to spare: to hit it dead straight was too much altogether, and indeed to hit the ball dead straight when you *must*—it is easy enough when you needn't—is one of the hardest things in all golf.

There was another hole, a long two-shotter, which also depended for its very considerable merit on a hazard, this time of water and marsh, which lay close to the line on the left for the whole length of the hole. Now when I look back on the course I wonder if I used my position as architect dishonestly and laid out the holes to suit myself, who am, on the whole, less afraid of a hook than a slice. It certainly appears that in the holes I have tried to describe the terror lurked always on the left. Ought we perhaps to have played the course the other way round? One notable architect of my acquaintance, Sir Guy Campbell, boldly turned a course round the other way at Bexhill, going out by the right instead of the left, making things nastier for the slicer and making the course generally better and more interesting. However, I do not think that that would have done for Dudular, and I am not going to let my conscience prick me severely at this time of day. Anyhow, ours was a course *sui generis*. No other that I know of had sixteen holes instead of eighteen; certainly no other had "flags" consisting of large rocks painted white and placed at a stated distance behind the holes. All other kinds of guide, except a sheep's skull and a helmet with a hole in it, were instantly stolen by the otherwise amiable inhabitants. No other had as its features "horses, dead, one," to use Ordinance language (it was only temporary, thank heaven), or dogs, wolfish, in considerable numbers, who hung on our flanks with the most disagreeable expression of countenance imaginable and would not allow of any protracted waggling. There was also the little gypsy girl who used to beg by the tee to the water-jump hole, who would not be silenced, and was the excuse for some bad shots. Likewise there was the shepherd, strongly scented with garlic, who would come and show us with a pathetic gesture his watch that had stopped, saying "Johnnie" in a tone that would have melted a heart of stone. Sometimes he would also bring us a lost ball he had retrieved and receive not pence but leptas "in his unwashed palm." Yes, it was very good fun, the more so as hardly anything else was fun at all. Besides—perhaps it is only a pleasant delusion—I think that because I was in such good practice, I wasted on that course some of the best golf that in my humble way I ever played. It has long since, I believe, been a "real" course now, with a brick club-house, the home of the Salonica G.C., and doubtless eighteen holes, all new and all different from mine. It can never be mine again.

"Twas my first-born, and O how I prized it!

My darling, my treasure, my own!

This brain and none other devised it—

And now it has flown.

SOMEWHERE ON THE EAST COAST



THE QUESTIONER

Where are the Squadrons, the fighting Squadrons ?
 Out in the mist,
 In the driving rain and the snow ;
 You'll never know—
 They'll be just where you don't expect them.

Where are the Squadrons, the fighting Squadrons ?
 Ready to strike,
 Here in the North Sea, there in the South,
 In river mouth—
 They're found where you least expect them.

What of the Squadrons, the fighting Squadrons ?
 England's sure shield ?
 They are out with torpedo and shell.
 And—you'll—get—Hell
 When you meet them and don't expect them.

M. G. MEUGENS.

CORRESPONDENCE

FELLING OF TIMBER

TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."

SIR,—While agreeing that vast quantities of timber will be needed during the war, it was depressing to read the Timber Controller's recent speech in *The Times*, in which he said estate-owners must fell all mature timber forthwith. No word of the need for replanting, failure to do which after the last war ruined our amenities and has left us short of timber in this war. I also failed to note any remark with regard to leaving so many trees per acre, as is done in France, to act as seedlings and to preserve at least some of the amenities of old England for which we are fighting. Let us hope the Forestry Commissioners will do something in the matter.—RUSSELL STEELE.

SHOULD STOATS AND WEASELS BE ENCOURAGED?

TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."

SIR,—The country round about where I live is infested with rats. The policy of the keeper whom I employ is to kill down ruthlessly all stoats and weasels as well as the rats themselves. I am assured by friends that this is a wrong policy to adopt, inasmuch as the more stoats and weasels are killed down, the more rats are likely to multiply. It is furthermore contended that neither stoats nor weasels do very much harm to game. I wonder whether the very able Natural History Editor of your delightful paper could give us some guidance on this subject? The question of rat destruction, in the interests of food conservation, is of paramount importance just now.—ENQUIRER.

[The stoat lives chiefly on rabbits, and the weasel on young rats, mice and voles. Owing to mice often being plentiful on a rearing field weasels are apt to visit it, to the terror of the keeper, who jumps to the conclusion that they are after his chicks. Now and again a weasel will kill young birds, but the large numbers of mice killed by these animals many times compensates for such lapses from grace. The weasel, taken all in all, is so beneficial that it must be classed with the barn owl for protection rather than destruction. The stoat, as said, lives chiefly on rabbits, but does account for some rats. It takes no great interest in "feather," but to persuade any keeper that the stoat is not his most deadly of all foes would, we suspect, be an impossible task. Yet, apart from the slaughter of rabbits, it is questionable if it really does him much harm. We consider that in a badly rat-infested district it would be sound policy to spare stoats as well as weasels.—ED.]

BLACKGAME ON EXMOOR

TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."

SIR,—There are still blackgame on Exmoor as well as on Dartmoor and the Quantocks, though they are not, in my experience, as plentiful as when I first knew Exmoor, thirty years ago. A dozen or more blackcock may be seen at certain well known lekking places from the end of March to the beginning of June; on April 22nd last, from 6.30 to 7.30 a.m. (S.T.), I watched ten cock going through their usual antics. But greyhens are scarce. I have been told that the reason for this is that too many hens have been shot (sometimes in mistake for grouse!), and that the survivors are too much worried by cocks. On eastern Exmoor blackcock are well distributed; I have notes of their occurrence in fifteen separate localities in the last five years.—E. W. HENDY.

TO THE EDITOR

SIR,—I am very glad to see such reassuring accounts of the blackgame in southern England in a recent issue of *COUNTRY LIFE*. A few years ago I was on Exmoor about Easter-time, and each evening towards 6 p.m. waited on a hill above a scrubby oak wood overlooking a valley and giving an

excellent view of a deer park opposite. Here a party of blackcock came soon after 5.40, the birds arriving singly and from different directions. They "fought" and danced for about half an hour, one being particularly good at that high leap into the air. Six or seven blackcock were the most that I saw, and their display was equal to anything I had ever seen in Scotland.—M. G. S. BEST.

THE ANGLO-TURKISH RELIEF FUND

TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."

SIR,—Two hundred thousand people are homeless, more than 40,000 lie dead, and 30,000 are injured as a result of the Turkish earthquake—far more than the total of Allied killed and wounded in the first five months of the present war. Snow, ice and fear of an appalling epidemic threaten the survivors. The need for money, medical supplies, stout boots, warm clothes and building materials is poignant.

Lord Lloyd, President of the Anglo-Turkish Relief Fund, appeals to all British subjects to send what money or goods they can spare. Turkey, our gallant enemy in the last war, our staunch friend in this, needs all the help we can give. Sir Wyndham Deedes, who is visiting the devastated area on behalf of the Fund, cables that thousands of men, women and children are walking about in the snowy ruins of their flattened villages wearing sacking on their feet. Many have lost their toes through frostbite. These people—mostly shepherds and farm workers—need not only stout boots but warm clothes, and building materials.

Five hundred villages are totally or partly destroyed. Five or six large towns lie in ruins. It is estimated that 4,000 bodies have yet to be dug out of the debris. An area more than twice the size of Wales is desolate. Cottages and farmhouses are mere piles of wreckage. The towns look like those shell-battered remnants of cities which we remember in northern France in the last war.

It is estimated that, if this earthquake had hit London, it would have destroyed more than half the City and would have killed between three and four million people.

Every British subject who wishes to help our ally in her time of need should send a gift to the Anglo-Turkish Relief Fund, c.o. St. Thomas's Hospital, London, S.E.1.—J. WENTWORTH DAY, *Public Relations Officer*.

DONKEY FOALS

TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."

SIR,—The reader who contributed the attractive photograph of two donkey foals to your issue of January 20th said nothing of the rarity of these animals in England. I have two or three times remarked in print that probably fewer than twenty donkey foals a year are born in England, and though one erstwhile donkey-breeder boggled a little at the low figure, no one has as yet refuted it. I should be most interested (and pleased!) if some of your readers would. A few donkeys are bred in the New Forest, in West Cornwall and at the western extremity of the Gower Peninsula in Wales, and occasional foals are born on the sands at

seaside resorts and in circuses. I think there may also be a donkey-breeder or two in Dorset, west of the New Forest. But two years ago, when I wished to photograph some donkey foals, I had the greatest difficulty in finding even one in southern England. However, I did obtain some snaps of a foal in the New Forest, and a friend kindly lent me the charming negative made of a foal bred (and petted) by herself. Donkey foals make captivating pets; but the vast majority of donkeys to be seen in England are, of course, Irish born and bred.—J. D. U. W.

RECIPES FOR ROOK PIES

TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."

SIR,—In Miss Pitt's article on "Rooks" published in *COUNTRY LIFE* of January 27th, she asks for a receipt for rook pies. This one comes from South Notts. *Ingredients*: Young rooks; pepper and salt; beef steak; butter; flaky pastry for pie-crust. *Time*: to bake 1½ hours. *Method*: Pluck, draw and skin the young birds. Cut out the backbone; it is bitter. Season with pepper and salt. Stew first to partly cook, and let them get cold. Lay a beefsteak in the bottom of the dish. Place the birds on it. Pour a good deal of melted butter thickened with flour and diluted with stock over them. Cover with a good flaky pie-crust. Brush with yolk of egg. Bake in good oven for 1½ hours. We used to soak the birds overnight in milk.—M. G. S. B.

[The following recipes have also been received: From Mrs. Edward Cadbury.

A recipe for rook pie (1820) used by her grandmother. Skin and draw rooks, taking care not to break the gall bladder, and remove backs; divide the birds into pieces and soak in milk for two hours. Dry, and season with pepper and salt. Arrange in a dish with small pieces of steak also seasoned. Put in a few bits of butter, and cover with stock. Make a paste of flour and water, and bake gently for two hours. When cold, remove paste; fill up with stock, and cover with a good pastry. Bake in a quick oven. Serve either cold or hot.

From Miss Jessica Hutton.

To prepare rooks for a pie: Do not open them, but cut the skin up the back and skin them; use only the wings, legs and body. The inside and backbone go out with the feathers. When skinned, put the rooks in milk and water all night or for some time. Make the pie as for pigeon pie, with steak at the bottom of the pie-dish, ham or bacon on each rook, and a hard-boiled egg between every two; also add good gravy and seasoning. Have more good gravy boiling hot ready to pour in through the hole at the top of the pie when cooked, as there should be plenty of jellied stock in the pie when cold. Rook pie is excellent cold for breakfast.—ED.]

THE WRENS' ROOSTING PARTY

TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."

SIR,—During the cold spell we noticed at dusk many wrens (troglodytes) coming to roost in a bird-box which we have upon a yew tree just outside the window. On Jan. 20th, when there were twenty-eight degrees of frost, we counted no fewer than forty-six of these little birds, entering the box at dusk, between 4.40 and 5.10 p.m. We missed counting them for two days, but on the night of the 22nd, at the same hour, we counted twenty-three going in. It would be interesting to know if wrens have been noticed before, collecting together in a small tit box in this way.—PRISCILLA LAYBOURNE, *The Firs, Malpas, Mon.*

[The wrens are known to roost in winter in little parties, but we are not aware of so many having been previously observed congregating in one refuge.—ED.]



"I'M A PET AND I KNOW IT"



VIC, A CROSS BETWEEN A FOX AND A SEALYHAM TERRIER

A FOX-DOG CROSS

TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."

SIR,—*A propos* a letter from "L. E." which recently appeared in your Correspondence columns, I turned up some old files to find particulars of what is, I believe, the only authentic case of a fox-dog cross ever recorded. During the last war the late Captain Roy Davis, who was very well known as a breeder of Sealyham terriers, was in charge of the Veterinary Hospital at Bulford, and had with him a Cairn terrier bitch as companion. In due course, as Nature ordains, the bitch gave way to the ills that her sex is heir to, and to save, as he thought, complications, Captain Davis shut her up in a loose-box with a tame dog fox that had been dug out as a cub by his friend and colleague, Captain Sidney Morgan. Imagine Captain Davis' surprise upon returning to the box, of which he alone had the key, to find the dog fox and his bitch tied in exactly the same way as ordinarily happens when members of the canine race are mated. Still thinking nothing of it, Captain Davis was more than ever surprised when, in due course, some nine weeks later, the bitch presented him with two puppies. Transferred from Bulford to Romsey, accompanied by his kennel, Captain Davis came across Mr. Ivor Anthony, the well known steeplechase jockey and trainer, who was attached to the Remount Department there, and he was so interested that he then and there wrote off to his friend, the late Hon. Aubrey Hastings, who was stationed not far off, to tell him of his find. Always a lover of animals, nothing would satisfy Mr. Hastings until he had one of the puppies; so Captain Davis made him a present of the bitch puppy, of which he took possession as soon as it was weaned. Vic, as she was called, was at first absolutely impossible; no one could do anything with her until she became more amenable under the tuition of an Italian groom, learned tricks, and was actually house-trained. Following the war, Mr. Hastings returned to Wroughton, and there mated Vic to a Sealyham terrier dog of his, to whom, I know, she had two litters of puppies. What happened to these, except that one puppy was given to Mr. E. Tyrwhitt Drake, then Master of the Old Berkeley Foxhounds, I do not know, but perhaps if Mrs. Hastings or Mr. Anthony read this, they will oblige by helping me bring the story up to date.—ADAIR DIGHTON.

RHYMING INN SIGNS

TO THE EDITOR
SIR,—This photograph shows the sign on the Bee Hive Inn, Eamont Bridge, Westmorland, a beehive in a garden full of flowers. The colouring of the sign is really beautiful and so unusual with its quaint wording.

During my holidays last year, I came across two or three examples of rhyming inn signs. One at

the Plough Inn, near Marlborough, said:

"With hopes we plough, with hopes we sow,
With hopes we all are fed.
And I am here to sell good beer,
With hopes to get my bread."

At the Fish Inn, near Broadway, the sign reads:

"Here a fish high floating in the air,
Bespeaks you will say but simple fair,
But enter courteous guest rest here and dine,
And the fish shall spout good ale, good punch, and good wine."



THE SIGN OF THE BEEHIVE, EAMONT BRIDGE

These "rhyming signs" seem to be comparatively scarce, but your readers may be able to quote others to be found elsewhere.—A. M.

FIVE CURIOUS STONES

TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."

SIR,—In the kirkyard of Rothiemurchus there is a recumbent slab on which rest five stones, each about nine inches in diameter, and shaped like a kebbuck of cheese. The slab is said to mark the tomb of the Shaw who captained the Clan Chattan in the celebrated clan conflict



THE HOMING STONES OF ROTHIEMURCHUS

on the Inch of Perth—Farquhar Shaw, who led "and was one of the thirty of this Clan who defeated the thirty Davidsons of Inverhavan on the North Inch of Perth 1390. He died 1405."

Tradition asserts that these stones appear and disappear with the ebb and flow of the Rothiemurchus family fortunes. Furthermore, it is held that, like so many Celtic bells, which could return to their rightful place, these stones, if removed, have the magical power of finding their way back to the slab, and that calamity befalls anyone meddling with them. In this same kirkyard are the tombstones of at least two men who were drowned at different times in the River Spey, near at hand, as a result, it is held, of their having tampered with these strange stones.—ALASDAIR ALPIN MACGREGOR.

SPORTING TROPHIES FOR A REGIMENTAL HEADQUARTERS

TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."

SIR,—The depot of the Durham Light Infantry have recently moved into new permanent headquarters in an historic northern castle. They hope to form there a collection of heads and horns which will cover the big-game of the world. They are looking for one or two good specimens of each variety, though of course it will take many years to achieve their aim. There are, in these days, many sportsmen who lack accommodation for their trophies, and they may rest assured that they will be very carefully looked after in the home of this famous sporting regiment. I should, perhaps, add that, though we have gladly offered them our services in the presentation of these trophies, we have no financial interest in the matter whatever.—ROWLAND WARD LTD.

"INDIA'S FIGHTING MEN"

TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."

SIR,—In your issue of January 27th you have an article by Charles Graham Hope on "India's Fighting Men." On page 86, half way down, is the following remark: "The Mahrattas and Baluchis are not found in the present Army." This is not correct; there is a regiment of Mahrattas, consisting of six battalions—the 5th Regiment. As regards the Baluchis, there is the 10th Baluch Regiment. This can be verified in the Indian Quarterly Army List.—E. S. J. ANDERSON, Lt.-Colonel, Indian Army (Retired).

[Captain Hope, to whom we forwarded our correspondent's letter, replies: "The Baluch Regiment exists as such, but Baluchis are no longer enlisted in its battalions, the class composition being Punjabi Muslims, Pathans (Khattaks and Yusufzais) and Dogras. Mahrattas are still enlisted in the Mahratta Regiment, but their total number in the Indian Army as a whole has been reduced since the war."—Ed.]

THE ROYAL ARMY ANGLING CORPS

ONE does not—mercifully—lose contact with fish and fishing in the Army. Take for instance my superior officer, Donald, who swears that at an early age, with a great bamboo pole, a bent nail, and a piece of string, he caught a multitude of small fishes in a *nullah* in Kashmir. This, his only attempt at angling, has whetted an appetite that since, he informs me, has never had a chance to be satiated. Then there is the Corporal, who is often, at the breakfast-table, heard to allude to the common herring as a “two-eyed steak” or a “North Sea tramp.” My batman, however, when asked his experience as a fisherman, replied that he had fished with a net in the Round Pond. Such an answer showed him to be no true lover of the sport, and he was hastily given a pair of muddy boots to clean. Now our D.R., Jock, when approached, tilted his “porridge” cap (as he calls it) on to the side of his head, and related how he had often been “doon the burn to catch a wee bit trout.” Here was the real thing, and afterwards he recounted his experience of guddling in the Highlands. “Och! When I guddled them right up, they were just in ma hand and then gone like a flash.” An unsuccessful poacher, perhaps, but a fisherman none the less, at heart. This was refreshing, and so was my meeting with the M.O., who, when not a sanitary inspector to His Majesty’s Forces, employs the time which he does not spend in his consulting-room on the banks of a Devonshire stream catching trout by fairer means than Jock. When we are not inspecting meat-safes, swill-bins (to see if the lids are on) together, we talk of great hatches of fly and the evening rise. The R.A.M.C. are well served by fishermen, and the O.C. of the local A.M.P. has fished the rivers of Southern Ireland, and we discuss the Blackwater, and “the people over the Mountains” (the Galtees) until we are all



A RESULT OF SOME HOURS
LEAVE IN SEARCH OF FISH

but casting a line below the weir at Careysville.

Our Clerk, he is a great eel-fisher, and often, as he plies the keys of our ancient typewriter, he stops, and sighs for his eels, before he strums out another set of indents. It is a wonder that we do not indent (on a suitable A.F.) for rods, lines and hooks, and see what the Quartermaster has to say about it, and as I remarked to the Staff-sergeant, it is a pity that the Army does not possess a fishing corps. We discussed this suggestion, and soon saw the possibilities of sending out fishing patrols to find out what there was to be caught. Our imagination, however, was agreed on one

point: flies, hooks and casts would assuredly be expendable stores. It would be easier to have a rod and line inspection than an examination of rifles; but these weekly returns of rods, roach, O/R for the use of, and rods, salmon and trout, officers, for the use of, to say nothing of nets, landing, general service, and flies, dry, artificial (Mks. I and II), would be somewhat disturbing. The training of recruits no doubt would necessitate many replacements. The requisitioning of suitable angling waters might be still more complicated. It would be delightful to hear a sergeant-instructor enjoining newly joined piscators to “Keep the forearm close to the body and on the command ‘Cast’ with a quick upward movement of the right hand allow the line to extend behind the body, horizontal to the ground, the thumb placed along the butt, and the four fingers gripping tightly the segmented cork”—and so on. Yes! there are great possibilities for the Royal Army Angling Corps, as it should be called. There would, of course, be sergeant-spinners and corporal-prawners, to say nothing of worming platoons; each platoon would have its gaffer-curer and boatmen (when necessary). There would be netting parties (not supplied with dynamite), while all ranks would be trained in night-lining, clotting (for eels) and trimming—“sergeant-clotter” or “lance-sergeant-trimmerer” would sound well enough. Such corps might well simplify the task of the R.A.S.C.; on the other hand, it might be an infernal nuisance. Anyway, although such a corps does not exist, I have spent some hours of leave in search of fish, and, thanks to a kind owner of water, have helped to satisfy my craving for a day on a river. Those few hours impressed on me what I have always believed, that fishing is the best cure for a multitude of troubles, and that even in war-time it is a most peaceful occupation. ROY BEDDINGTON.

A RACING MISCELLANY

THE arrival of the annual volume of Messrs. Weatherby’s *Racing Calendar* (Races Past) is always eagerly awaited by everyone who is in any way interested in bloodstock. The *Calendar* appeared for the first time in its present form in 1773, and was preceded by somewhat similar compilations by Pick, Cheney and Heber. Not only is this the official record of every flat-race that was run for in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland during the previous year, but it contains the Rules of Racing and of the Jockey Club, a complete list of colours registered by owners, the winning produce of every stallion tabulated under his name, a complete record of every bloodstock auction, and, what is here of most importance, a statistical *résumé* of the runners, the races run for, and the stake-money disbursed in the year under notice.

Statistics are proverbially dull; comparisons are commonly looked upon as odious; but there are times, like the present, when a combination of the two, where racing is concerned, is not only beneficial but may be comforting. It is obviously unfair to compare, as some have done, the figures relating to the season of 1939 with those of 1938. For the sake of completeness, however, it may be said that last season there were in Great Britain 3,993 runners for 1,520 races, which between them carried stakes of £560,094 in England, £45,249 in Ireland, and £15,687 in Scotland, as against the 5,143 horses who in 1938 competed for 1,985 events, carrying stake-money of respectively £731,826, £41,398 and £28,205. Considering the complications that arose last

September, and the chaos that supervened in the sporting world in general during the last quarter of the year, the comparison, though unfair, is satisfactory; but a more apt and at the same time far more pleasing one can be obtained by weighing the figures given for 1939 against those that were returned for 1914. Then it will be remembered that, though hostilities commenced in August, Doncaster and all the three Newmarket autumn meetings, as well as many others, came off as usual. The *Calendar* shows that the number of runners for the year was 3,906, the number of races run for was 1,449, and the stake-money disbursed was £468,204 in England, £40,083 in Ireland, and only £4,365 in Scotland. This clearly proves that at the moment racing is in a better—or shall one say sounder?—position than it was at a similar time in 1915. But there is one factor that prevents one taking too optimistic an outlook as to the future. In the last war both the Old Course and the Summer or July Course were available for racing at Newmarket, so that, with extra meetings featuring the classics usually run for at Epsom and Doncaster, the sport was to a certain extent centralised at headquarters. Now there seems little possibility of the Old Course being used, so that the whole of the usual twenty-eight days’ racing which takes place at Newmarket will, if allowed, have to be run for over the Summer track. This will tax the course to its utmost, and new venues will have to be found whereon to run the substitute but very essential races for the Derby, the Oaks and the St. Leger. So far the Jockey Club have made no decision, but it is hoped that before long—possibly before this article appears

in print—a definite announcement will be made; a “hush-hush” policy cannot in this case be necessary.

Flat-racing, as at present arranged, will open on Easter Monday (March 25th) with a single day’s meeting at Hurst Park and one of similar duration at Birmingham; Lincoln and Liverpool occupy the following week, and then, after two days at Nottingham and two at Newbury, the two days of the Craven Meeting will open the season at Newmarket. Hurst Park, which has been arranged to take the place of the abandoned Kempton Park fixture, features the Victoria Cup, a handicap plate of £1,400, and at Birmingham there is an important race for three year olds—the Burton Handicap—to be run for over a mile and a quarter on the Monday.

These preliminary arrangements, combined with a change in the climatic conditions and the appearance of the first acceptance for the Grand National ‘Chase and the weights for the Lincolnshire Handicap, will soon disperse the temporary gloom from which the bloodstock world has suffered since the December Sales. At the first acceptance for the Grand National only ten of the original entry declared forfeit, the most notable being Miss Paget’s Roman Hackle, Mr. J. V. Rank’s Arran Peaks, and Mr. Ambrose Clarke’s London Town. None of these is important, as Miss Paget is still left with Kilstar, Le Cygne and John Chinaman, from which to make a choice; Mr. Rank can be represented by either Timber Wolf or Young Mischief, and Mr. Clarke’s colours can be carried by The Uplifter, who ran such a good race in the



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Champion 'Chase over the Aintree fences last March.

Seldom, if ever, has there been an entry for the Lincolnshire Handicap containing, as does this year's, the names of a French Derby winner and of two colts who hold the record for being the highest-priced yearlings ever sold—and sold in Ireland. As was commonly expected, the French Derby winner, Cillas, has been mulcted with the top weight of 9st. 7lb., and between him and the three—Corena, Bannymead and Coerced—who are allotted the minimum impost of 6st. 7lb., the handicapper, Major Johnson, has utilised a range of 42lb. to its utmost advantage. In every way it is a fascinating compilation that will amply repay deep study even if without financial gain. Cillas, though a

classic horse, does not appeal as a winner, for on more than one occasion last season he appeared to have ideas of his own as to how much or how little it was necessary to do. Golden Sovereign, whose cost price of 2,700gs. at the Ballsbridge auction of 1936 was the highest ever paid for a yearling in Ireland, seems of somewhat similar temperament, but is not harshly treated with 9st., and has in Mr. Harry Cottrill a trainer who knows what is required on the Carholme. Colonel Payne, who cost Miss Paget 15,000gs.—the world's record for a yearling—seems with 8st. 9lb. to have every bit as much to carry as he deserves. Apart from these three, there are Booms-a-Daisy, who first ran as Sirree (8st. 4lb.); Titan, who emanates from Mr. Jack Jarvis's stable, where the winners Flamenco and

Phakos were trained (8st. 2lb.); Southport, a four year old of Lord Glanely's (7st. 13lb.), and Davy Dolittle, who has 10lb. less to carry than the 8st. 7lb. he shouldered last March. All four read as an attractive collection that, on form, are handicapped to half a pound, while, wherever they are at the finish, there also must be Aldine, an inmate of Mr. Tom Couthwaite's stable, who with 7st. 5lb. finished close up fourth to Squadron Castle (who was fourth in 1938). Halcyon Gift and Dark Tolly. It would indeed be strange if he were to follow in the footsteps of Squadron Castle and improve from fourth to first, but that and other matters connected with the race can be left over until a later article, when the intentions of owners and the progress of the horses will be better known. ROYSTON.

THE ESTATE MARKET

CASTLES TO BE LET OR SOLD

HALF a dozen ancient and historic castles are to be let or sold, and there are two or three residences, called castles but neither very ancient nor historic, that may also be rented or purchased. Subject to any transactions which have not yet been notified, the list of available castles includes, notably, Chilham, for sale by Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley and Messrs. George Webb and Co., by order of Sir Edmund Davis's executors. The grounds are partly laid out in terraces commanding a delightful view of the Stour valley and of the wooded hills that rise towards the Canterbury-Hythe Roman road. The rock and water gardens are elaborate, and there is a private cricket ground. The Castle, built about 320 years ago, has been attributed to Inigo Jones, but this attribution, like many others, is disputed by authorities on the architect's achievements. Who was the architect is perhaps of no great moment; what matters is that he designed a noble mansion, and it has been well maintained by successive generations of owners, and now embodies every modern improvement that a lavish outlay could provide. Fertile farms, good residences, Chilham water-mill, the village hall and other properties in the village, and a model home farm, make up the total freehold of 2,110 acres. Five views of the Castle and its environments appeared in COUNTRY LIFE Supplement on September 23rd, and another view of the Castle on August 19th (page 188). A special illustrated article on the seat was published in COUNTRY LIFE (May 24th and 31st, 1934, pages 812 and 858).

The list of castles available includes St. Briavel's, Beverstone, and Wadhurst, as well as Banff.

MESSRS. HAMPTON'S SALES

IN their 1939 report Messrs. Hampton and Sons say: "The year opened in an atmosphere of tension due to political unrest abroad, which increased as the time advanced, and was reflected in no uncertain manner among would-be purchasers and vendors alike. Town and country auctions fell to the lowest ebb for many years. The quest for large rural properties by many business houses formed the only bright feature of an otherwise difficult year; large mansions hitherto not easy of disposal found willing buyers among various companies anxious to safeguard their staff. The demand for the better type of residential property for private occupation, however, decreased, particularly where any large degree of upkeep was entailed, owing to reduced incomes and heavy taxation, and as the year progressed and the political outlook became more threatening, it became increasingly difficult to dispose of residential houses in London, the supply many times exceeding the demand. This state of things exists to-day, though a fair amount of



THE GARDENS OF GOTWICK MANOR, EAST GRINSTEAD

business has been done since the war in furnished and unfurnished lettings.

LARGE ESTATES DEALT WITH

THE demand for agricultural land hardened, trusts and others being satisfied with a lower return on their outlay, but sound investments of this nature are becoming fewer, and the demand far exceeds the supply. In spite of all difficulties a number of important country estates have been dealt with, including Bonningtons, Ware; Wistlers Wood, Woldingham; Newlands Park, Bucks; The Mount, Iffeld; Brooke Hall, Norwich; Warren Mere, Godalming; Wiston estate, Lanarkshire. The volume of lettings has increased considerably, both furnished and unfurnished houses finding tenants at good rents. Those dealt with include Birklands, St. Albans; Burford House, Worcs; Walkampton, Hants; and Chussex, Walton. As to the future, attractive offers await buyers with available funds for inexpensive properties, which should, on return to normal conditions, show considerable profits, thereby proving safe investments for surplus capital for the present time. The fact that no provision has been made by the Government to protect owners against damage resulting from war will, we fear, continue to have an adverse influence on property investments so far as London and certain towns are concerned.

FURNITURE AND VALUATIONS

IT has been a very active and successful year for the Furniture Valuation and Sales Department, the high spot being the sale of the fittings and contents of the giant liner *Berengaria*. This was the fourth of a series of eminently successful sales of famous liners. Apart from this sale, a considerable number of successful 'on the premises' sales have been held in London and all parts of the country from the north of England to Shanklin. On this subject it is interesting to note that from the commencement of this war prices for furniture and effects have shown a tendency to increase, and at the present moment the usual good quality contents of a house have appreciated some 20 per cent on pre-war prices.

"There has been no falling off during the course of the year generally on the number of insurance and probate valuations which have been carried out, but from the first day of the war this firm has been actively engaged with a considerably augmented staff on the preparation of large numbers of valuations for the Government. The acquisition of premises has entailed a large amount of work, such as the valuation of premises and contents and schedules of repair, the detail work alone being almost as much as could be coped with."

THE BREAK-UP OF RUFFORD ABBEY

OVER 770 acres of land in Eakring have just been sold by Messrs. Knight, Frank and Rutley, bringing the aggregate sales to about three-quarters of the original area. It is thought that oil may be got from deep borings in the Eakring district. The seat is held by the Savile (Notts Estate) Trustees, representatives of a tenure that had lasted over four centuries and comprised 18,730 acres, on both sides of the Nottingham and Doncaster main road, fifteen miles north of Nottingham. The district has undergone a great change in the last quarter of a century, and the opening of three large collieries has involved the provision of housing in Ollerton, Bilsthorpe and Rainworth.

The greater part of the heathland, known as Rufford Forest, has been taken on a 999 years' lease by the Forestry Commission, and much planting has been done. The estate derived its name from the Cistercian abbey founded there 800 years ago. The Elizabethan house, built not very long after the estate had been granted by Henry VIII to the Earl of Shrewsbury, was enlarged by the Marquess of Halifax, who added the Stuart wing. Among Royal guests at the Abbey the best remembered are George IV as Prince of Wales, and Edward VII, who enjoyed visiting it on many occasions for Doncaster Week. Articles on Rufford Abbey appeared in COUNTRY LIFE (Vol. XIV, page 650; and Vol. LXXXIV, page 189).

A £50,000 MODERN HOUSE

PROXIMITY to large landed estates is a strong point in favour of Gotwick Manor, between Tunbridge Wells and East Grinstead. Messrs. Ralph Pay and Taylor are to sell the freehold at a very moderate price, or to let the house furnished. Gotwick Manor cost considerably more than £50,000 to build, and it is a charming copy of the finest Elizabethan work. The house has a bathroom to every two or three of its fourteen bedrooms, and some splendid reception rooms. The beautiful garden contains a small lake, and the home farm, woods and lands, together with the grounds of the house, make up a total area of 120 acres. ARBITER.